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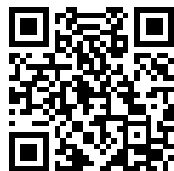
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THE

ALPINE JOURNAL:

A RECORD OF MOUNTAIN ADVENTURE

AND

SCIENTIFIC OBSERVATION.

BY MEMBERS OF THE ALPINE CLUB.

EDITED BY E. L. STRUTT.

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THE ALPINE JOURNAL

VOL. 39, Nos. 234 AND 235

THE
ALPINE JOURNAL

A RECORD OF MOUNTAIN ADVENTURE

AND

SCIENTIFIC OBSERVATION

BY MEMBERS OF THE ALPINE CLUB

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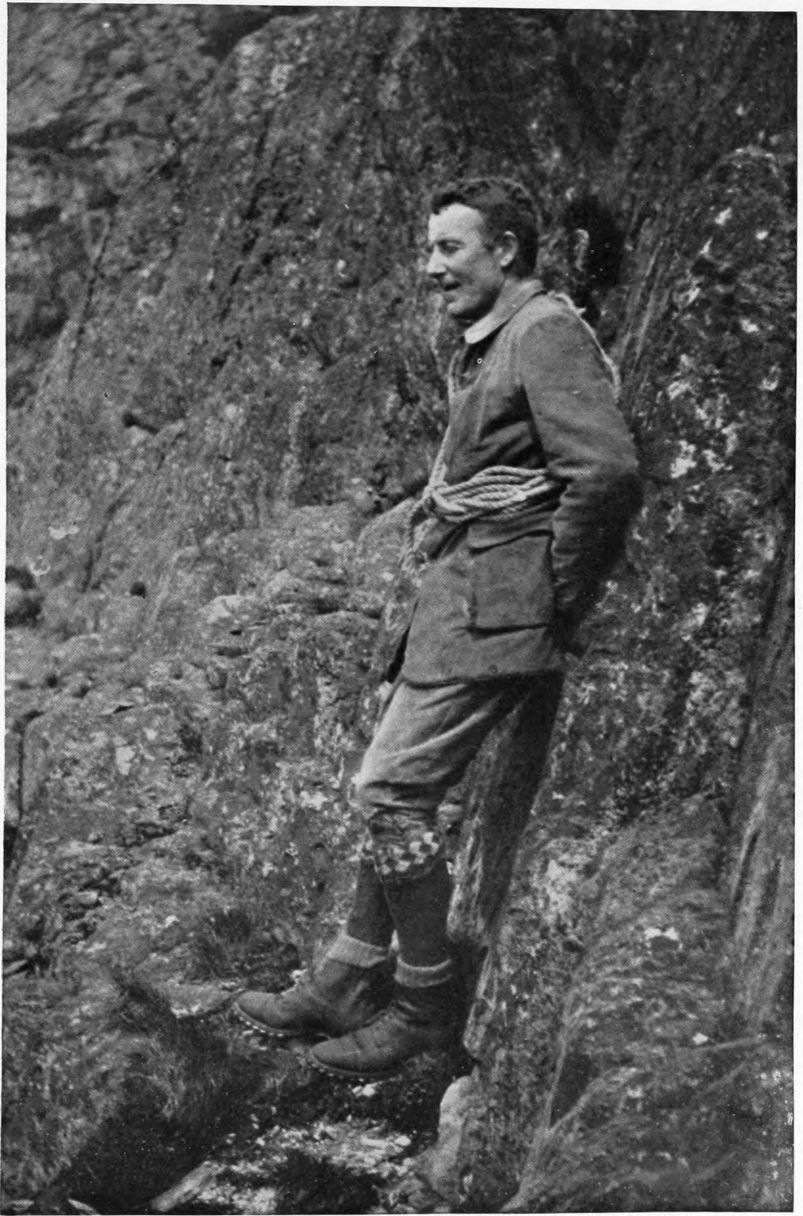
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RAYMOND BICKNELL.
1875-1927.

THE ALPINE JOURNAL.

NOVEMBER 1927.

(No. 235.)

CLOSING THE ITALIAN ALPS.

IT is with great regret that we find ourselves compelled to record the existence on the Alpine frontiers of Italy of a system of obstruction to free travel, unprecedented, we believe, in times of peace. Along the whole extent of the chain from the Maritime Alps to Tyrol, the Trentino and Jugoslavia, the mule and glacier passes have been during the past summer more or less closed to travellers desirous of entering or leaving Italy. Members of the Alpine Club have found the Foreign Office passports, which the Italian Government formally declares to be the only documents necessary for visitors to Italy, wholly disregarded by individuals claiming to act under some official authority. British travellers, both men and ladies, mountaineers and local guides, have been not only turned back summarily and without warning, but arrested and detained and even in some cases deliberately aimed and shot at by bands of youths describing themselves as 'Local Guards' or 'Fascist Militia.'

The facts above stated are, unfortunately, not open to question. The Editor of the ALPINE JOURNAL has had brought to his notice some thirty instances, authenticated by thoroughly trustworthy evidence, of interference with travellers. He has himself had personal experience of others. Several of the worst, in which firearms have been used, have occurred on the French frontier and in the neighbourhood of the Mont Cenis.

If we may believe a telegram in *The Times* from its Roman correspondent, the Italian Government denies having issued any instructions that could possibly have authorized the forcible closing to travellers of the High Alps. In a later telegram, however, (published on August 29, 1927) from the same corre-

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P

spondent, we read as follows :—‘ The exercises of the Fascist Militia in Northern Italy have now ended and General Bazan, Chief of Staff of the Fascist Militia, is highly satisfied with their success. In a statement made to a Fascist weekly publication, he points out the efficiency of this voluntary corps, its perfect organization, and the task which is reserved for it in case of war. He says that perfect discipline has reigned among all ranks of the “ Black Shirts ” throughout the manoeuvres and that their enthusiasm and interest in the military exercises were such that their commanding officers were forced to issue orders *to prevent incidents due to their excessive ardour for battle.*’

‘ For battle ’ ! With whom, we ask, did these Italian Don Quixotes desire to do battle ? The native cowherds, or innocent tourists and their guides ?

At first sight there may seem to be a notable discrepancy between the two telegrams cited above, but the phrase we have italicized in General Bazan’s report on the proceedings of the irregular force lately under his command may serve to suggest a plausible explanation of what has happened. It would seem that local militia, imperfectly disciplined and acting in small detachments, have, without authority, discharged their martial ‘ ardour ’ by creating the recent ‘ incidents ’ referred to, in which the chief sufferers have been travellers duly provided with the documents required and recognized by the Italian Government. They have, of course, not been the only sufferers. The population on both sides of the frontier have found themselves deprived of the stream of summer visitors to whom they look for an annual harvest.

The ALPINE JOURNAL has nothing to do with the matter of our complaint in its political aspect. But in its practical consequences it affects the mountaineers of all nations, and most of all our own Members, who since the time of John Ball and F. F. Tuckett have done much by their example and their writings to further the exploration and the development of the *Italian Alps*. We have felt it therefore impossible to pass over without notice the arbitrary and apparently unauthorized interferences with the movements of travellers to which our attention has been called, both privately and in the Press. Having done so, we are content to leave any further remonstrance in the hands of that very competent body, our ancient ally, the Club Alpino Italiano. We feel confident that it will spare no trouble to prevent the repetition of incidents that have pained all friends of Italy. It may surely be trusted to see to it that the Italian Alps are not permanently excluded from *The Playground of Europe* !

WITH THE SHAKSGAM SURVEY PARTY—1926.¹

BY THE LATE MAJOR H. D. MINCHINTON, M.C.

IN 1926 it was my good fortune to be attached to a party despatched to the E. Karakoram by the Survey of India. In that it was a survey expedition, climbing was a minor consideration, being only permitted by the survey officer in charge of the party when the objects of survey work made it necessary. This necessity lay in finding practicable ways over glaciers and snow passes for the party to further its explorations, and in ascents of minor summits in the search for routes.

The region which the party explored is, however, of great interest, and the resulting map fills in some 1200 square miles of hitherto unexplored country. The region lies N. of the main chain of the Karakoram range, from K² in the W. to the Remo glacier in the E., with a line drawn somewhat S. of the Aghil pass due E. to the Yarkand river as the N. boundary, a line slightly W. from that pass to K² as the W. boundary, and the line of the Yarkand river as the E. boundary. A large portion of this area was surveyed, some more was sketched—*i.e.* roughly surveyed—and the small portion already surveyed in Valley 'I,' by Col. Wood, Survey of India, re-surveyed on a larger scale and certain unavoidable inaccuracies corrected.

There remain, however, certain portions which the party unfortunately failed to reach, the final exploration of which should prove highly interesting.

The exploration party was in charge of Major Kenneth Mason, M.C., R.E., Survey of India, and it is noteworthy that he has now been awarded the 'Founder's Medal' by the R.G.S. for this expedition.

The other survey officer was Khan Sahib Afraz Gul Khan, of whom it is impossible to speak too highly and without whom the results would have been decidedly less. His name is, of course, familiar to members. In 1925 he was attached to the Vissers' expedition in Hunza, and in both expeditions brought back fine plane table maps of the districts explored. His work with the transport and in camp proved not the least valuable of his varied activities.

¹ Major Minchinton suggested that this paper should be considerably curtailed. Under the circumstances, we prefer to publish it *in toto* as a slight memorial in this JOURNAL of a gallant soldier, mountaineer and explorer.—EDITOR.

Attached to the expedition were Major R. C. Clifford, D.S.O., M.C., I.M.S., who, besides looking after the health of the expedition, helped with transport arrangements and specialised in botany and geology; Captain F. O. Cave, M.C., the Rifle Brigade, whose side lines were meteorology, ornithology, and the not unimportant matter of the feeding of the British officers' *personnel*.

My own work was such alpine work as was required, the feeding and clothing of the Indian and Ladaki *personnel*, with entomology as a side line, and also the military report on this new region. A Survey Havildar and three Gurkhas of my battalion completed the party.

In 1889 Sir Francis Younghusband, after crossing the Aghil Pass from the N., had looked up the Shaksgam valley and reported its head as full of glaciers.

In 1914 Col. Wood, then with Cav. F. de Filippi's expedition, looked down a valley, which he called 'H,' from his Pass 'G,' and which he believed to be the true source of the Shaksgam river. He reported that no glaciers were visible. From these two reports naturally arose considerable doubt as to whether these two valleys could be one and the same, and it was surmised that Col. Wood's Valley 'H' might possibly break N. through the Aghil range to the Yarkand river.

The main object of the expedition was to clear up this moot point, and it was originally intended to follow Valley 'H' right down and link up with Sir F. Younghusband's exploration. Certain difficulties, which were unexpected but which were really not insuperable, prevented the execution of this plan. After definitely fixing the source of the Shaksgam river, surveying the upper Shaksgam valley and confluents, and photographing the Middle Shaksgam with the new 'Wild' photo-theodolite, the Aghil range was crossed, and a large portion of this hitherto unknown range—or series of ranges—was successfully explored and surveyed. Attempts were made to get back to the Shaksgam lower down, but these all proved abortive—the rivers were now all in spate and the gorges proved inaccessible.

The party assembled in Kashmir on April 18, where three weeks were profitably spent in checking the stores and equipment from home, supplementing supplies by local purchase, and attending to the many necessary details, on the careful forethought of which the success of such an expedition must largely depend. Great credit is due to Mason for the thoroughness of the preparations. The R.G.S. was naturally very much

interested in the expedition and had generously supplied Whymper tents and sleeping bags, besides the ' Wild ' photo-theodolite.

Unfortunately the spring weather was atrocious in the Himalayas in 1926, but thanks to weather reports telegraphed to Mason from Simla, we were able to slip over the Zoji La during a break by lantern light on the night of May 15, and reached Leh without incident on May 27.

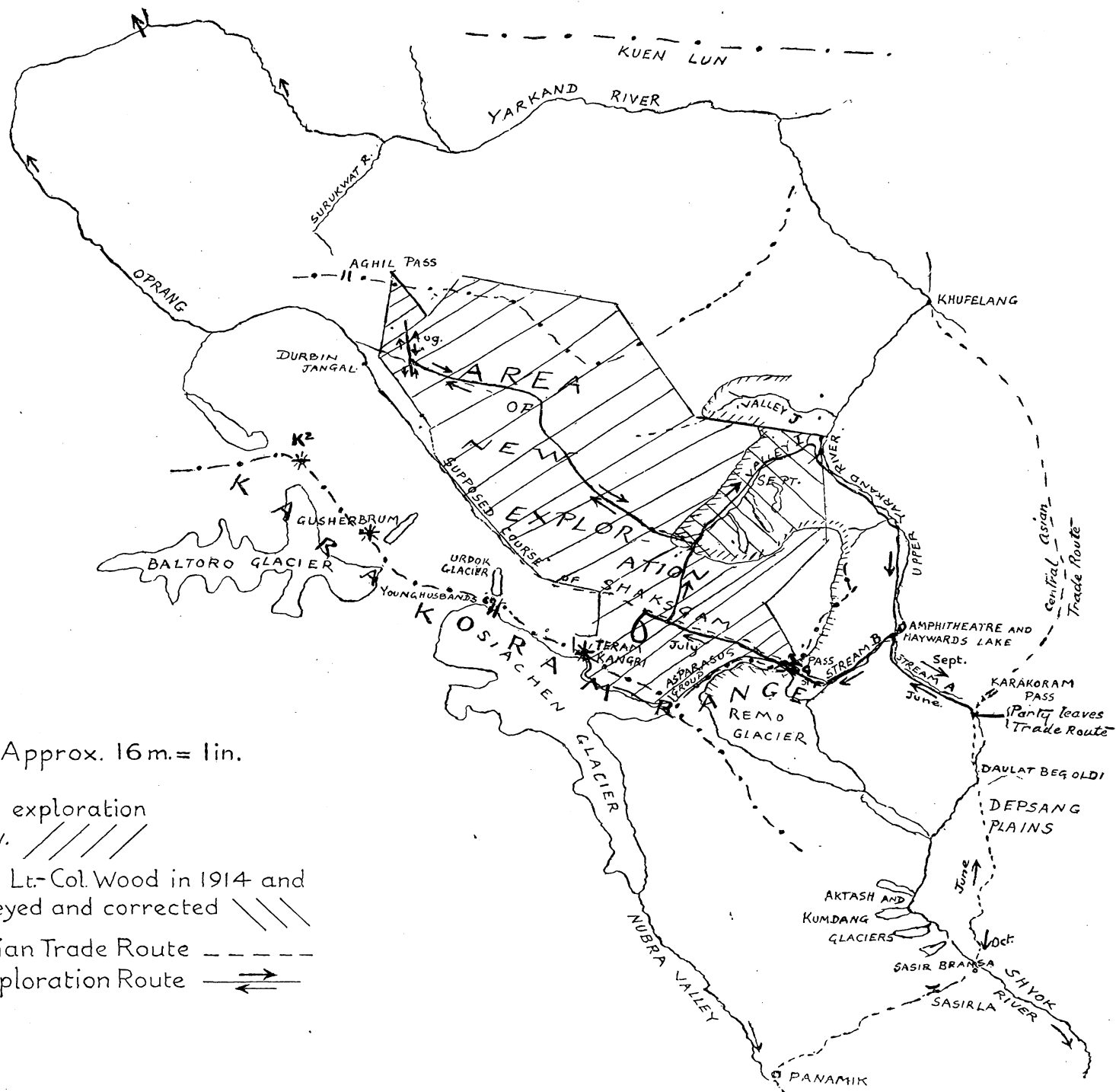
Here we purchased 21 ponies which were to remain with us throughout—unfortunately 10 died before our return, mostly owing to lack of grass—and engaged 24 permanent Ladaki porters, who proved in every way splendid fellows. Here also we purchased the bulk of the food supplies for the porters, and also blankets and sheepskins for them and our other followers to supplement jerseys, gloves, etc., brought from India.

We were to follow the Central Asia trade route—the highest and most difficult in the world—as far as the Karakoram pass, and then strike off to the N.W.

Owing to the late snowfall no caravans had yet come through, and traders were waiting for our party to open the passes this year. The first pass, the Khardong La, 17,500 ft., caused us some delay. Clifford and I attempted to get the bulk of our transport—yaks—over the pass on June 7, but failed miserably. The yaks could only get to about 16,000 ft., so we made a dump of the loads and returned to Leh, after I had gone to the top of the pass to look at the state of the far side.

On June 9 I went into residence at the foot of the pass and on the 10th Mason and I went to the top with some laden porters and unladen yaks to break the trail. Next day Cave and I went to the top, taking more porters and yaks. On the 12th, Mason, Clifford and the remainder of the party came up to the camp and a very large army of yaks.

We had a great day on the 13th, and managed to get nearly everything over the pass and down to a camp on the far side, but it was a very strenuous day for us all. I shall not forget the spectacle of a large yak, which, becoming alarmed just before the summit of the pass, turned and ran down the steep slope, with the result that it turned a complete somersault, and landed right way up again on its legs. Unfortunately we lost three yaks killed by falls on the northern slopes. Only half of our 21 ponies could be got as far as the top on the 13th, and that with great difficulty owing to the soft deep snow, into which they sank and out of which we had to lift and drag them for hours. They had to spend the night on the pass ; the second



Scale Approx. 16 m. = 1 in.

Area of new exploration
and Survey. //

Surveyed by Lt.-Col. Wood in 1914 and
now resurveyed and corrected //

Central Asian Trade Route - - - - -

Mason's exploration Route ==>

[To face p. 210.]

half had to be sent back from the worst patch and came over the following day.

Five days of easy going took us to Panamik, in the Nubra valley, the last village on the trade route. We halted two days here to collect the pony transport which was to take us to our base and leave us there: here also we laid in a stock of 'grim' (grain) for our ponies.

We now took on some 150 ponies—and a few yaks to aid in trail-breaking over the Saser La, a few days ahead. The ponies on this trade route lead a short and rather terrible existence, being worked for a few years and then generally perishing by the wayside. The whole trade route is well marked by hundreds of skeletons which bear pathetic witness to the lack of grass and arduous nature of this high-level route.

June 21 saw us really off with all traces of civilization left behind for many months. Two marches took us to Sangposhi, where we halted for the night in a sandstorm. Next day Mason and I started at 9 A.M. with unladen porters to see what the Saser La conditions were, and to break and cut passages through drifts and across slopes, where the winter snow still lay thick. During the afternoon I reached a point near the top of the pass, whence the remainder appeared simple. We met an unfortunate trader, coming from the Yarkand side, who had misjudged the date by which he had hoped we should have opened the pass. He had had to abandon his caravan on the far side and was now trying to descend on our side with a few ponies and men, who, like himself, were snowblind and all in a bad way. We were able to render timely aid and received many blessings.

Mason and I camped at the foot of the pass, and the former sent back orders for the expedition to get under way at 2 A.M. on the 24th, so that they could reach the foot at 5 A.M., which they did. I started shortly before their arrival and spent a strenuous two hours cutting a passage in ice from the last rocks to the flatter and snow-covered glacier surface—this being a glacier pass. We had some trouble with our temporary transport—the only time during the expedition—and had a good deal of manhandling of loads and snow-bogged ponies, but eventually everything reached Saser Brangsa on the far side by 9 P.M. Unfortunately we lost 2 or 3 ponies crossing the pass.

There had been some talk of part of the party taking the northern route with our porters from Saser Brangsa to Dualat Beg Öldi—the route via the Aktash and Komdong glaciers

(crossed by Dr. Longstaff and Oliver in 1909) which can only be used for caravans on the rare occasions when none of the glaciers, which advance and retreat rapidly, block the upper Shyok.

It was, however, decided to continue together on the out journey, leaving the alternative route to be visited by at least some of us during the return journey. Major Oliver, in Kashmir, was particularly keen for us to revisit this route. We crossed the Shyok river next morning, and winding up gorges for three days, camped on June 27 in the middle of the Depsang plain, at the stone where De Filippi had made his base camp in 1914. We were treated to a mild snowstorm during the ensuing night.

On the 28th we crossed the Chipchak river, passed Dualat Beg Öldi and camped a few miles short of the Karakoram pass. From Panamik to the Depsang we had passed through Alpine country—towering peaks and many glaciers—but now the country became more Tibetan—high rolling hills, some of them snow-capped.

The 29th saw an important stage of the journey reached. We left the Karakoram pass to the E., crossed an almost imperceptible col, about 17,800 ft., and struck down Wood's Valley 'A,' and at 4 P.M. reached the Yarkand river at what we thought must be Wood's 'Amphitheatre,' where we camped and got a little very scant grazing for the transport.

We rested here next day, discovering the real Amphitheatre together with Hayward's lake (which that early explorer had thought to be the source of the Yarkand river) a few miles down the river. We also shot a few Tibetan antelope and everyone had a feed of fresh meat. The wind here was bitterly cold.

On July 1 we started up Valley 'B,' passed close to the snout of a branch of the Remo glacier which gives birth to the Yarkand river, and struck up Valley 'F' in a blinding snowstorm, which was luckily of short duration. We made camp within easy distance of Pass 'G' which was to give us access to the unknown land and which lay invitingly at the head of easy slopes at the top of the valley.

I see a remark in my diary to the effect that 'the wind has caught our faces badly again.' It was pretty chilly about this period, and our beards had not yet become such useful and impervious doormats as they subsequently became.

Early next morning, July 2, we stood on Pass 'G' and looked down into 'the valley'—'the great unknown,' the goal

at which we had arrived, and into which our thoughts had been projected for many months—in Mason's case, for years.

At the summit—17,930 ft.—we spent 4 hrs. starting the survey work from the previously fixed points behind us. Mason set up the photo-theodolite and the Khan Sahib commenced on his plane table the map, the gradual growth of which we were to watch with so much interest through the succeeding $3\frac{1}{2}$ months.

As Wood had stated, we 'looked down a broad valley' into which no glaciers flowed. But what we also observed was that, after some 10 miles, the valley narrowed and became a gorge, and that at some 20 miles or more the valley appeared to hit at right angles against a line of snow peaks, and it was absolutely impossible to make out whether the valley then broke W. or E. If the former, it was probably the Shaksgam; if the latter, it must break through to the Yarkand, and we must look for the Shaksgam elsewhere.

Mason hoped that the line of snow peaks would prove some hitherto uncharted giants, but the result of calculations gave them a mere 23,000 ft. and less—so henceforward they were called the 'Tiddlers'—in point of fact they lay on the outer Aghil range—the Red wall. A snow pass through them was visible—our subsequent 'Marpo La.'

We camped a few miles down Valley 'H' at a spot where a little grass gave welcome feeding to the ponies, of which the conditions were taking sad toll. That evening we put 'The Entry of the Gladiators' on the little gramophone which I had brought—a fitting refrain which I had kept for our first night in 'the valley.'

On July 3 we got down, through the gorge we had seen, to 16,200 ft., and made our base camp. The gorge was, during its narrowest stretch of about a mile, barely wide enough for pack animals, and was probably quite impassable later on in the year.

The stream we were following, which we soon found definitely to be the Shaksgam, rises from the glacier which forms one flank of Pass 'G'—a branch of the Remo. The Yarkand and Shaksgam rivers therefore both rise from branches of the Remo, and within a few miles of each other, though flowing N. and N.W. respectively and not joining for over 100 miles. Though the Yarkand is regarded as the main stream the Shaksgam actually brings to their junction a far larger flow of water, tapping as it does the huge glaciers on the northern slopes of the Karakoram range—Alpine country—whereas the



Phot. H. D. Minchinton.

THE MARPO-LA, 18,500ft.



GROUP IN YARKAND VALLEY
With 'Expedition' Gurkhas.



FROM 'SHORT-CUT' COL., 19,500ft.
 Left: Aghil Ridge, 23,000ft. Right: K² and 'Staircase' Peak.



Phots. H. D. Minchinton.

VIEW W. FROM ABOVE COL.
 N. face of 'Red Wall'; K² and Gasherbrum.

Yarkand runs through far more barren, sunless and Tibetanlike lands, tapping but small glaciers. The amount of water in some small streams, during the flood season, must be seen to be believed. These streams, and the gorges through which they run periodically, form the chief bar to progress in this region.

We had got an idea that we should descend into a land, if not of milk and honey, at least of good grass and some sort of shrubs and trees, perhaps, for fuel, with plenty of game for the pot. But we were badly mistaken. Grass was, except in one valley into which we later moved our base, almost entirely absent; our fuel consisted always of burtzi root, and even that apparently ubiquitous plant sometimes failed us, and the game was very rare owing to the absence of grass. We were soon to find out the error of entering a land of which nothing was known, relying partly on pony transport instead of wholly on porters. When discussing matters with Mason in 1925, I had asked what would happen should conditions prove unsuitable for ponies. Mason, however, relied on Wood's dictum—he being the only explorer who looked into Valley 'H'—that the country appeared suitable for ponies. One might naturally suppose that, if the upper reaches of a valley are ice-free and suitable for pack transport, the lower reaches will present even less difficulties.

But that again proves the impossibility of trying to forecast anything in this country, where streams perform 'S' turns and one never knows which way they will run next—any way except uphill and sometimes apparently that!—and where an open valley at 18,000 ft. may become an ice field at 16,000 ft. Such was our experience.

On July 4 we paid off our temporary transport, which started at once to Panamik, leaving us with our 18 ponies (3 having died out of our 21) and 24 porters—a good many of whom were required for the carriage of survey instruments.

The base camp was situated within a mile of where the valley hit the afore-mentioned line of peaks (the 'Tiddlers') and swung westwards and then N.W. Another valley from the E. joined valley 'H' shortly before camp. Clifford, who had ridden some miles down the valley, returned in the evening with the report that, five miles down stream, the valley appeared blocked by a large glacier, descending from the S., behind which a lake had formed. We were not amused, and began to unpack Alpine equipment and the collapsible boat—an old and leaky structure which the Joint Commissioner for Ladakh had lent us

On the 5th we all rode down the valley and reached the obstruction. As we rounded the last corner before the glacier we were met by a truly wonderful view. A mile of broad, stony valley led to a lake, about 2 miles in length and half a mile broad. At the far end of this was a wall of ice, some 200 ft. high—the flank of an immense glacier, the surface of which was a mass of towering séracs. In the distance—away down the Shaksgam—rose the massif peaks of the Gasherbrums.

The lake was partially frozen over still, giving it a white appearance, which earned for it the name of Kyagar Thso, 'the grey-white lake,' from our Ladakis. Such names as we gave tentatively throughout the exploration were those bestowed by the Ladakis according to some natural feature which struck their imagination. Mason hopes that these names will be officially adopted by the Survey of India. The glacier was named the Kyagar glacier.

The formation of the lake is a matter of some interest. It is evident that it has a small outflow at its W. end, forcing its way under the glacier where the latter abuts against the N. wall of the valley—the Outer Aghil wall—under the 'Tiddlers.' But during the flood season a vast quantity of water comes into the lake from the glaciers of the Upper Shaksgam. The lake rises and spreads backwards up the valley. In the winter it freezes, and with the spring thaw the surface ice remains in huge blocks perched up on the shale slopes. Some of these blocks were many feet in thickness; both sides of the lake and the shale slopes for some way back were covered with blocks. The height to which the lake rises each year is clearly shown in the shale slopes by ridges made by the ice, the slopes being covered by these ridges. It is evident that in some years the lake rises nearly to the height of the glacier and extends backwards for some 6 miles from the glacier. As water does not begin to flow into the lake until about June, the outflow has time to take off a large quantity of water before it commences to fill up again.

Leaving our ponies at the lake, we scrambled along the N. shore amidst the ice blocks until we reached the glacier. Actually to get up into this was none too simple. A huge sérac had fallen from the side of the glacier at the corner of the lake and formed a somewhat unstable bridge. However, I considered it my duty to see at once whether it would be possible to get porters across this part of the glacier, so crossed the bridge and scrambled up between séracs on to the surface of the ice. Never have I seen such a sight. From the surface

of the glacier rose tier after tier of immense séracs, one interminable chaos of huge towers, through which it would never be possible to construct a satisfactory line of communication for porters. So that was that.

The following day Mason commenced the survey of the side valleys leading into the Shaksgam, the Khan Sahib making a plane table station at about 18,000 ft. in the neighbourhood of the base camp, from which station most of the country could be seen.

Cave and I moved a light camp down to the lake in the morning and ascended a small hill, about 17,500 ft. to the S. of the lake, to get a view of the upper reaches of the Kyagar glacier. Shortly before reaching this hill, as we rounded a shoulder, we saw what I suppose was the finest spectacle which can be imagined. There burst upon our view the huge majesty of K², rising cloudless and peerless into the sky—40 miles down the valley. But this was not all, for in succession, closer to us, rose Broad Peak, all the Gasherbrums, and lastly the particularly beautiful and comparatively close summits of Teram Kangri. Southwards lay the Asparasas group, and from this group, first in many large ice streams and then in one immense frozen river, descended the Kyagar glacier.

We could not see the actual snout of the glacier, but far below us there emerged again the middle reaches of the Shaksgam valley, into which some ten miles further down another huge glacier could be seen protruding, and then yet another, below the Gasherbrums, probably the Urdok of Sir F. Younghusband.

The mystery of the valley now lay explained. Sir Francis, from the stream, looking up the valley, saw only glaciers. Possibly he saw the Kyagar, possibly only the next one down the valley from us. In any case it would have appeared to him that these glaciers formed the head of the valley and the source of the Shaksgam. He was not to know that the valley extended many miles E. of the furthest glacier he could see—an unnatural phenomenon. Similarly Wood, looking down from 'Pass G,' could only see 'an open valley.' He was not to know that it took a right-angle turn, and that round this turn these huge glaciers descend into and block the valley. We now had the ocular proof that the apparently different valleys of those two explorers were in reality one and the same. We took photographs, built cairns for survey points, and examined the glacier below us. This latter appeared to be some 2 miles broad, and for some 5 miles up from its snout was of the most chaotic nature imaginable. It was not crevassed, as ordinary

glaciers, but the weight and vast quantity of ice descending from its main three parent glaciers, when squeezed into the 2-mile trough, force the whole surface up into a chaos of huge towers. We did not notice their size until the following day. To the N. lay the long line of the Outer Aghil range, forming the N. wall of the Shaksgam valley—the 'Red wall.'

On July 7, a day Cave and I shall never forget, we left camp at 6 A.M. with some porters and Rifleman Telakbahadur. Passing our furthest point of the previous day (Shaly Col), and leaving the porters here to build more cairns and wait for our return with food for us, we ran down 1500 ft. of shale to the glacier, and put on crampons. This was Cave's first introduction to serious ice work. From our reconnaissance overnight, we had worked out a possible line across the glacier, but not until we were embarked on it did we realize the immensity of the towers of ice. Some were huge stable blocks, others pinnacles rising to the thinness of a needle point 200 ft. high. Direction was hard to keep, as one could see no landmarks against this labyrinth. The hoped-for passage was impracticable—we would work a few hundred feet through the labyrinth and then be forced southwards up the glacier for some distance. At length we were actually forced back towards the home shore, but then struck an open run of ice—a passage about 80 yds. broad, covered in débris, lying between the central portion of the glacier and another confluent of which we now caught sight, coming in from the S.E. Here—4 miles up from where we began—we stopped at 1.30 for a meal. The surroundings were wonderful, huge towering pinnacles of ice from which depended enormous icicles, blue caverns as large as Pullman cars, and bottomless pits into which thundered glacier streams—otherwise silence, now and then broken by the reverberation of some falling sérac.

Leaving Cave and Telakbahadur to follow, I pushed on up this hummocky passage for another mile. Here at least was a porter route. At 3 P.M., if we were to get back by dark, I decided it was time to turn. A final view from a neighbouring sérac gave me the impression that another half mile would end difficulties, that this passage would lead me to more open ice, whence a central promontory of rock—part of the Asparasas group—might be gained and from which the remainder of the glacier might be crossed above this chaos. Unfortunately we were never permitted to confirm this idea, though both Cave and I wished to do so. Retracing our steps we followed this passage down the glacier and were delighted

to find that it led us to the edge of the ice—5 P.M. We were now getting tired, so I sent Telakbahadur ahead, to go down the moraine and reach Shaly Col as quickly as possible, so as to prevent the porters returning to camp with our food.

Unfortunately there was neither a valley between moraine and hillside nor a proper moraine, and in one place we were forced out on the glacier again by a sudden perpendicular face of ice which abutted against a cliff. By 6 P.M. we were nearing the foot of the shale slope and took it diagonally. We could only manage a few feet of the slipping surface at a time and eventually arrived, nearly exhausted, at Shaly Col as the last rays of the sun were leaving the top of K². It was 8 P.M. and no sign of porters. We met these, however, a bit down on the camp side—had tea, and reached camp at 10.20 P.M.—16½ hrs. with hardly a rest.

Next day, a note from Mason arrived, in which he said that, in view of the difficulties of this glacier route, he thought an easier way might be found by crossing the Aghil range into Wood's 'I' valley, and thence working westwards to strike back in the middle Shaksgam below these glaciers. So Cave and I returned to the base. Meanwhile Clifford had found a way up on to a glacier—the Lungpa Marpo—which lay hidden in a side valley running into our valley from the N. not far below the base camp, and at the top of which there should be a pass into 'I' valley. On July 10 he and I started at 6 A.M. to reconnoitre this glacier. Mason and Cave moved down to the lake to complete the survey work there and to survey by photo-theodolite as much of the middle Shaksgam as could be seen.

Crossing the stream a mile below camp, we soon reached the side valley and the snout of the glacier in it. A passage between a large sérac and the rock wall, discovered by Clifford previously, led us to the right lateral moraine, and by 10.20 we were on nearly level snow-covered glacier at 18,500 ft. and stopped for a meal. To the N. lay an easy pass level with us, and to this Clifford, with Kunchuk (our head porter and shikari), now proceeded. To the W. lay a snow col at the head of the Lungpa Marpo river, which I hoped might lead over behind the 'Red Wall' to another valley, which might break S. again through the wall at a gap we had noted from the Kyagar glacier.

With Rifleman Tekhbadur and a porter I set off for this col, hoping to rejoin Clifford at the breakfast place by 4 P.M. Finding hidden, but small, crevasses, we roped and mounted

by slope and plateaux to the col, which we reached at 3.40 P.M. This was probably the *highest point* reached during the expedition, as the Khan Sahib later computed it to be 20,300 ft. We had left our coats at the breakfast place as the day had been hot, but here on the col a bitter wind swept over us, chilling us to the bone, but by crawling under a boulder photographs could be taken (though into the sun) and chocolate and tea partaken of. The view was most impressive. From our col dropped a fairly steep snow slope to a glacier below. Across this glacier rose the northern slopes of the Outer Aghil wall—peaks of 22,000 ft. here—and between the gaps in this ridge could be seen the long line of giants—K², Broad Peak, and the Gasherbrums. This was a unique view, and I much regret that neither Mason nor the Khan Sahib was able to visit the col for topographical purposes. We did speak of the Khan Sahib and myself coming up later, but, as so often with us, it was a case of ‘man proposes,’ etc., though I do not think that the Deity can be held responsible for abandonment of some of the plans made!

The snow slopes falling to the glacier below would not have been pleasant for the porters, nor was it possible to see what happened farther down, as the glacier wound out of sight some 2 miles westwards. But I should have liked to have been given the opportunity to explore it to ascertain whether we could break back through the outer wall. The foot of the glacier must have been in the neighbourhood of the gap seen from the S. side.

At 3.55 P.M. we commenced to return from the col, and there followed for me the eight worst hours of the expedition. The cause of my undoing was traced by Clifford to a bad tin of potted meat, of which he, Cave, and I had partaken overnight. Clifford felt ill in the morning, and being a doctor, was able to apply immediate remedies. Cave spent the next day in bed, and the poison chose this unfortunate hour to start reacting upon my digestion. I soon realized from unmistakable and violent symptoms that something was ‘wrong with the works.’ Added to this, the snow on the glacier had softened, and the 4 miles to the breakfast place was one series of sinking in, knee and waist deep, often with a leg through into a small crevasse, and having to be dragged out on the rope. At length we passed the breakfast place, where there was no sign of Clifford, and got off the ice on to the moraine at 7.30 P.M. Here Clifford had left two men with the tiffin basket, but an effort to drink and eat merely produced vomiting and increased

weakness. So down the moraine we hurried at such a pace as darkness would permit. After many falls and rests by the wayside, we reached a little cliff above the Shaksgam stream and by pure luck struck a slope down which we slid to the water—now in several channels and rushing knee-deep. With linked arms we crossed safely and wended our weary way to camp at 10.40. I found that Clifford had only been back an hour and was pretty done up. I spent two days in bed 'getting the works right again,' but didn't mind much as the weather was none too good for the next few days, causing Mason some delay over his photo-theodolite work.

On July 15 Mason, Cave, and I moved down to the lake again, the former to complete the survey work there and I to try a hopeless-looking gorge which came down into the N. of the lake from behind the 'Tiddlers.' I went a short way up it during the afternoon and got into difficulties at once with unpleasant rocks. Next morning we all left at 4.45 A.M. for our different jobs. I took Tekhbadur and a porter with me, but we were back in camp by 7.15. The gorge was hopeless for porters, and bad enough for a roped party. We only got up a few hundred feet. When Tekhbadur remarked 'If anyone falls here, we shall all be for it,' I thought it about time to recognize defeat—this not being a climbing expedition.

After a meal and a rest, we started off again at 10 A.M. with two additional porters, bedding, etc., retraced our steps to the Lungpa Marpo glacier, halted to collect burtzi roots, and finally made a bivouac by 4 P.M. well up the moraine, at about 17,800 ft. The object of this journey was to cross the col which Clifford had visited with Kunchuk during a reconnaissance on the 10th, and if possible descend it northwards into 'I' valley (Lungmo-Chhé). The porters afterwards named the col the 'Marpo La'—'Marpo' meaning 'red'—from an unmistakable red cliff near the summit. Starting next morning with Tekhbadur and a porter at 6.15, we crossed the pass at 7.45—height about 18,500 ft. and very easy going. At 8 A.M. we reached an outcrop of moraine on the N. side and left warm clothing there. Below us we could see a jumble of séracs, but by hugging the left bank of the glacier we soon got on to a comfortable moraine, and by 9 A.M. were parallel with the summit of the glacier. It appeared as if there would be no difficulty in descending into 'I' valley, and I spotted a likely camping place some 1000 ft. below and sent the porter to reconnoitre farther down 'I.' We could see two large glaciers, mentioned by Wood, coming down into the valley farther E..

and above there appeared a green patch which must be grass. Here was a good spot to which to shift our base.

Tekhbahadur and I, keeping to the 18,000 ft. contour, traversed the shaly hillside, heading for rocky mounds from which I hoped to see up the main (N.W.) branch of the head of 'I' and to get a view of the glacier at the head, round the snout of which Wood had promised us an easy pass similar to 'G.' By 11 A.M. we reached our objective, close to a large glacier, which had every appearance of blocking this N.W. branch completely. The bottom part was a mass of séracs, but higher up, close to our mounds, was an easy way up on to the flat glacier above the séracs. This was all we had time to find out, and being now midday, we had to hasten back. We met the porter, who reported no difficulties below, and crossed the Marpo La in good time. By 3 P.M. we were making tea below our bivouac place, and 5.15 saw us back in camp, able to report an easy passage into 'I' valley for our porter transport.

It was now decided to abandon any attempt at a direct descent of the middle Shaksgam and to transfer our base to the head of 'F' valley. This was made the more imperative by the lack of grass for our ponies, who were daily getting weaker. Clifford and Cave were to take the ponies back over Pass 'G,' feed them on the grass of the Yarkand valley as they moved down to it, and then move up 'I,' as Wood had done in 1914. Meanwhile Mason and I were to cross the Marpo La with the porters and as much kit as could be carried and start a system of transport going to fetch over all necessary stores.

During the next two days most of our base camp stores were moved to the snout of the Marpo glacier where a dump was formed. On July 20 the move began. Clifford and Cave left at 8.30 with the 18 ponies, now so weak that they could only carry grain enough to see them round into 'I,' and were useless to help shift anything in the nature of real loads round to the new base.

Mason and I moved up to 'the green lake'—a little tarn amongst mounds near the dump, after building a wall round some foodstuffs and extra equipment which it became necessary to leave at the old base until they could be fetched in September.

On the 22nd some further survey work was done and the first lot of loads sent up to the edge of the ice—above my bivouac of the 16th—under Tekhbahadur, who knew where a safe place for a camp could be found there. On the same day we moved up to the camp and got up a lot of stuff. On the

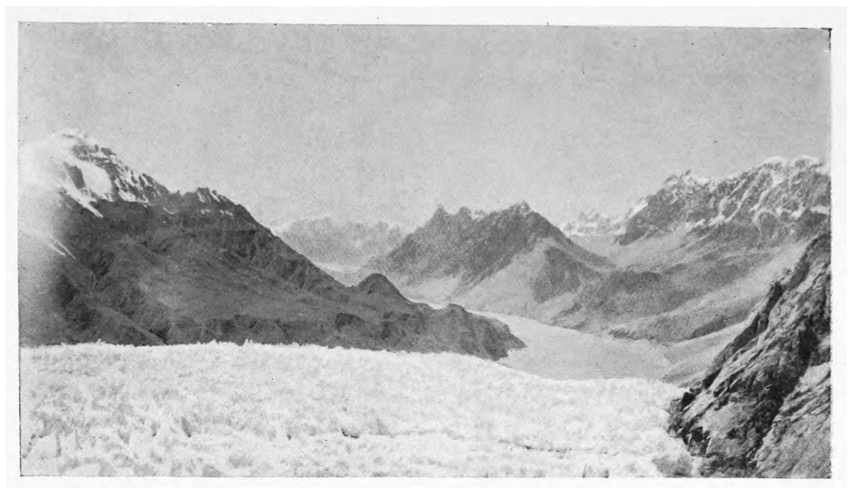


PONY IN CREVASSE at 19,000ft.



Phots. H. D. Minchinton.

AGHIL PEAKS, 23,00ft. RIDGE.



LOOKING DOWN KYAGAR GLACIER.
In background K², 'Broad' Peak and Gasherbrum.



Phots. H. D. Minchinton.

THE ACTUAL SOURCE OF THE SHAKSGAM RIVER.

23rd we crossed the Marpo La, and whilst the porters descended to the selected camp site at the head of 'I,' Mason and I and the Khan Sahib followed the same route as I had done on the 17th, and reached the first glacier at the head of the N.W. branch of 'I' at noon. We got up on to the ice and crossed some two-thirds of the glacier—flat going, snow a bit soft, and a few crevasses. From here we could see a second and parallel glacier, a mile ahead, which came in from the S.W. and joined the one we were on about a mile down from where we were. The two made below their junction a mighty sea of séracs, forcing themselves tight against the cliffs on the opposite side of the valley, and sending a snout down S.E. into 'I' and another N.W. into a valley, the trend of which lay N.W. as far as we could judge.

Coming back to dry land, we next reconnoitred the snout of the glacier, round which Wood had promised the 'easy way.' We were doomed to disappointment—there was no way for ponies past the snout, the terminal séracs of which merged into the opposite valleyside. We followed the stream from the glacier down for some 2 miles and reached camp, which was pitched on an old lake bed, formed by the damming of the stream by a glacier which lay half a mile below camp, the snout of which was now well back from the valley floor.

This new base was at 17,200 ft. That day we despatched men back over the Marpo La, and the transfer of the remaining stores began—it took five weeks to complete! Mason and I made a trip some miles down the valley to see if a gorge just below camp, reported in 1914 impassable for ponies by Wood, would still prove so, and also to ascertain how far it was down to grass and burtzi. The gorge proved passable, and grass and fuel were located some 4 miles down—we spent a pleasant day taking things easily and collecting butterflies and fossils.

Then followed a reconnaissance over the Tuni glaciers, the Sa-Kang La (Pass of snow and mud) which we crossed, and looked down into the Sa Lungpa or 'Valley of Mud,' as the Ladakis named it. Neither of the glaciers presented much difficulty and we worked out a line for ponies and left Telakbahadur to cut a track up on to the first glacier. What intrigued me was the fact that this new valley appeared, some few miles down, to turn W. and cut right back towards Aghil wall—the central wall now—S.W. back towards the Shaksgam. It appeared to us as if there was a narrow gap in the 'Red Wall' but we could only hazard a guess as to whether it was our new valley cutting through, or another valley coming towards us

into this one. We made a different line back over the W. glacier, crossing amidst incipient séracs just above its junction with the E. glacier.

Two days later Clifford and Cave brought in the ponies. We had begun to get anxious, as they were two days over the anticipated time, but the necessity of giving the ponies grass when found had delayed the arrival, and even so, 3 more ponies had died *en route*. The remaining 15 were now much fitter, and we left them at grass below the gorge, together with our 6 remaining sheep. The party brought a welcome addition to the larder—2 antelope and 2 burrhel, which soon vanished amongst our 40-odd persons in camp. Mason now decided to push on over the 'Tuni glacier' and down to Sa Lungpa. He was optimistic about getting back to the Shaksgam by this route, but decided that, owing to lack of porters and the quantity of stuff still to be brought over the Marpo La, Clifford and Cave must remain at the new base in support. He hoped that we should be back in ten days, and that the base party would be able to join us earlier. Actually our 'advance party' was away five weeks from the base, which proved the most arduous time both for us and for those in support. On July 29 we sent off 12 porters during the afternoon to sleep at the edge of the southern Tuni glacier, following ourselves at 4 A.M. on the 30th with the 4 strongest ponies. By 5.45 A.M. we had the ponies up on to the flat glacier, loaded them up and crossed it in $1\frac{1}{2}$ hrs. with only a little difficulty getting off, where a passage had to be cut in the ice. The second glacier, reached in another hour, took twice as long to cross, as the sun was softening the snow, and in one patch of some 300 yds. the ponies went in up to the withers, necessitating manhandling their loads and digging them out continuously. A few small crevasses had to be probed for before we got the ponies and porters safely off the second glacier at 10.15 and halted for a meal.

Then commenced the descent down a stony and steep ravine to the Sa Lungpa valley. This small valley must surely be the most desolate spot in Asia. Some 5 miles long, flanked on both sides by steep rock and ice-clad peaks, the valley bottom itself and lower slopes seem composed of dried grey mud, and during the ten days we spent in that little valley the sole vestiges of life seen were 2 snowcock and 1 fly—the latter was found inside my tent and had probably come over from the base camp in the rolled-up tent. Nor was there a sign of vegetation—no burtzi, although we were down to 16,000 ft.

Our march down the valley brought us to what we named 'the pony camp,' being the farthest point the ponies could reach. Poor beasts—the Sa-Kang La was really too much for them, and they only just got back to the base alive—we had taken them, loaded, over two glaciers of nearly 19,000 ft., on starvation rations, and they did wonderfully well.

On arrival at the 'Pony Camp' Mason immediately set off to explore 'the gap' at the entrance of which we were now camped. Our Sa Lungpa certainly broke through the Outer Aghil wall here, and we hoped to follow it through, with the further hope that it similarly broke through the Outer wall back to the Shaksgam. Mason's exploration was short-lived, as he found that the going became impossible within $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles of camp, where the stream dashed through a gorge. What he could not see was that the gorge, at the entrance of which he stopped and which he thought ran only for a short distance, in reality extended for several miles. This melancholy fact disclosed itself to me from a hill, 1500 ft. above camp, to which Tekhbadhur and I repaired when Mason set off down stream. On this hill we built 'Tekh's cairn' which served as a good survey station later. From the cairn the view down the gorge was most impressive. The stream, after cutting through the central wall and its ramifications, appeared to strike against the back (N. slopes) of the outer wall and turn left-handed—north-westwards. Beyond the outer wall we could see the Gasherbrums towering loftily. I am of the opinion that it does not break through, but again swings N., and is the self-same river that we were to meet three weeks later, vastly increased by streams from many glaciers. The streams in this region think nothing of boxing the compass on frequent occasions, during a few miles' course.

To the N. of our hill lay another valley, which joined the Sa Lungpa about $\frac{1}{2}$ mile below us, and the view in this direction led me to believe that we should have some prospect of success in pushing up in that direction. On August 1 Tekhbadhur made further survey cairns on a col of hard grey mud above camp, while Mason worked out latitudes and other problems. The following day Telakbadhur and I discovered an interesting fact whilst following the left side of the N. valley at a high level. We crossed the grey mud col, dropped down to the gorge below, hoping to find a way up it, but could not actually get into the gorge, being stopped by a waterfall. Ascending to the col again, we kept along the 17,500 ft. contour over shale slopes to a yellow mud col over a spur, dropped 500 ft. and rose

the same to another grey mud col. On a spur near this we built a small cairn and found several fossils of small shells. It was wonderful to think that these fossils, now 17,500 ft. above sea level, had once lain on the sea-bed. From this cairn we got a good view up the remainder of this valley. We could see that the gorge ended below us and that the stream did then become a practical route; that we could get down the shale slopes ahead to the stream without difficulty and that, some 2 miles farther up, the stream divided. The N.W. branch was a violent torrent, red in colour, flowing from a glacier the snout of which was covered in red-coloured moraine. The glacier appeared to be about 5 miles long, and at its top lay a high but apparently easily reached snow col. But it was the stream coming down the N. branch which really intrigued us. Whereas the N.W. stream was turbulent and red, the N. one flowed placidly and was blue! This to my mind could only mean that the N. branch did not flow from a glacier but from some other purer source. This small stream appeared into view from round a corner, so we could see nothing more than the first 200 yds. of it, which was tantalizing. We got back to camp at 4.15 P.M. with 15 fossils and a route in our pockets.

The next day was an anxious one. For two days we had had next to no fuel—cold meats, except for tea. We used our invaluable 'Meta' to keep the camp going with hot tea, except for which the men were able to cook nothing. During the afternoon 8 porters with burtzi arrived, so we were able to arrange to push on instead of retreating. Most nights lately a little snow had fallen, but the days were mostly wonderful, and some good survey photos were taken. The Khan Sahib, of course, was out every day working from some hill-top with his plane table—he was never idle.

On August 4 he started with a minimum of porters up the N. valley to the junction of the red and blue streams now established 'Clean and Dirty Water Camp'—'Dirty-Clean' for short. Thanks to Tekhbahadur, an easier way over the second Sa-Kang La glacier had been found and 5 ponies arrived with loads of burtzi and rations for the men. We were not travelling by any means 'light,' not nearly as light as we might have done, considering the paucity of porters and that we were engaged in a 'push.' It became necessary to take two days over each move from now onwards, there being insufficient porters to carry everything on our journey.

On the 5th Mason and I started at 7.45, and reached 'Dirty-

Clean' at 1 p.m. Whilst waiting for porters to arrive I went a short way up the 'Clean' branch and saw no difficulty for the first $\frac{3}{4}$ mile at all events. The Khan Sahib was busy surveying on a hill immediately N. of the junction and made his station at about 18,500 ft.—2500 ft. above camp. Close to our tents was the first small patch of grass we had seen for days, and a few flowers, amidst which a 'Bee Hawk Moth' and a few butterflies flitted gaily—a cheering spectacle which seemed to announce the proximity of greater verdure—even possibly 'Durbin Jangal' not far distant as the crow flies—which reminds me that some choughs accompanied us from camp to camp throughout the five weeks. We christened them 'George' and 'Mary'; occasionally they brought along a friend or two as well. The Khan Sahib returned at 3 p.m. and confirmed what I had conjectured, that the 'Clean' branch is the N. branch, the 'Dirty' is the Westerly.

On the 6th Mason and I started at 5.45 a.m., he to explore the 'Clean' branch, and I to try to reach the same col at the head of the 'Dirty' branch. Taking to the shaly hill N. of camp, I passed the Khan Sahib's station at 7.15 and mounted by an easy ridge and patch of névé to a snow-capped peak—about 19,500 ft.—which I reached, with Telakbahadur, at 8.15 a.m. The view was wonderful. To the S.W. and S. lay the walls of the Aghil ranges in serried rows—glacier-covered summits and bold spires running up to 23,000 ft. Almost due S. could be seen Teram Kangri and the Asparasas group. But the most extraordinary prospect lay to the N.E. Instead of further serried rows of peaks lay a totally unexpected barren plateau of some 30 square miles extent—a replica of the Depsang (so that we later naturally called it the Aghil Depsang). Evidently once a vast ice cap, the glacier has retreated from its centre, leaving huge snouts projecting miles out into the plateau, like the bodies of gigantic dragons descending from the surrounding peaks.

There is a legend that an army of Kalmuk Tartars once invaded Ladak from Chinese Turkestan, finding a way from Khufelang through this region, and then over some pass in the vicinity of the Urdok glacier. One of our objects was to search for any trace of this ancient route, and it seemed to us that any such army must have crossed this plateau.

At the same time as I was regarding this new phenomenon from on high, Mason was crossing the snowless col at the head of his 'Clean' branch and setting foot—perhaps the first human foot—on the plateau. Far to the N. lay a vast range—

probably the Kun Lun. Our col lay still a long way off, so we could not stay long on this hill top. A long run down névé and shale took us to the edge of the glacier, from which the 'Dirty' stream emanated. We struck it about 2 miles below the col, and were soon plodding carefully up the snow-covered surface, roped, as there were several visible, and invisible, crevasses. At 11.30 we halted at an outcrop of rock for a meal, then headed for the left bank and kept up this towards the col. Before reaching the latter we struck right-handed up a farther snow slope which took us to a snow summit to the N. of the col—about 19,800 ft. The view from this summit was even finer than from the previous one, as K² now appeared through a gap in the Aghil wall, some 20 miles away, soaring upwards into the sky. Below, westwards, lay a glacier, winding out of sight, but which did not appear to have great difficulties for porters. N.W. lay a deep barren trough, at the end of which lay a broad, barren valley in which a river flowed. It was hard at this distance to determine which way the water in it ran, but it appeared to me to run northwards. The 'trough' ran up N. of our summit to a gap in the walls surrounding the Aghil Depsang, and I felt sure a way could be found from the Aghil Depsang over the gap and down in the 'trough' or narrow valley. Having reached this summit at 12.50 P.M., we commenced the return journey at 1.5 P.M. in softening snow, but were off the glacier at 2.30, and, after cutting over a rocky spur, kept down the left bank of the glacier to camp, which we reached at 4.45—a good day's work rewarded with some unsurpassed views.

The following day we moved camp a 3½ hrs. march on to the Aghil Depsang, sending back the porters in the afternoon for the remainder of our things, as we were now always forced to do. Owing to the shortage of fuel we had been unable to have hot water for a bath since leaving the base, and in a mistaken desire for cleanliness I had, two days before, bathed in a glacier stream, with the result that I was somewhat unwell for the next few days. Even the short march to the Aghil Depsang was trying, and after tea I had perforce to do a 2-mile walk after some antelope, as we were in sad need of fresh meat. I was rewarded with a bag of two stray females—the porters had to eat their share practically raw, as we again failed to find any burtzi here.

Mason ran into two coveys of sandgrouse, amidst which he did great execution, and put our minds at rest regarding the fresh food problem for some few days. The trouble was to

cook anything. We managed to dry moss, and add a little antelope dung, which made some sort of a fire. The 'Meta' was kept in reserve as long as possible. The grass on this large plateau was so scarce that it barely supported half a dozen antelope, and after taking toll the first day, the remainder became very wild and unapproachable. On the 9th the Khan Sahib took a light camp to the E. end of the plateau and surveyed a large portion of country. The plateau is evidently the real head of Wood's valley 'J.' He placed the head much farther E., having no idea of the existence of this plateau phenomenon.

On the 10th we moved up a ravine towards the gap I had seen on the 6th as leading westwards over into the trough. We made camp at 17,700 ft. at the foot of a small glacier leading to the gap. This was a bitterly cold camp, bounded on one side by a névé edge fringed with icicles and on the other by a small stream, the water of which would freeze when taken out for the morning ablutions in a tin basin—so the ablutions became somewhat sketchy.

On the 11th we reached the gap in an hour over easy glacier. The gap was at about 18,700 ft. and Mason made a station 200 ft. above it. He thought it probable that, had the Tartar army come in this direction, they must have passed over this gap. The ravine we had come up was therefore christened the Tartar Lungpa, and the gap was the Tartar La, descending from which was the deep trough or Kalmuk Lungpa, into which a steep line of descent down some slopes was evident. We spent 5 hrs. at the station and noticed for the first time the Central Asian haze—the 'Loess' haze—which began to obscure our fine view of K² and other peaks. We found, close to camp, several apparent traces of gold amongst the stones, and powdered the latter to carry back. The weather was rather troublesome, and from that cause and lack of supplies we were forced to remain idle in camp for some days. We ran out of tobacco and tried Ladaki coolie tobacco, which our porters had, and moss—not a very pleasant mixture!

On the 13th Tekhbadur and I visited another gap more to the N., proving it to be an alternative route to descend into the Kalmuk Lungpa. From this gap we traversed a small peak of about 19,500 ft. and descended to the Tartar La to join Mason and the Khan Sahib surveying there. Two porters were despatched down on to the Kalmuk Lungpa to look for burtzi and anything else they could find, and great was our joy next day when they returned with burtzi, twigs of bushes,

and flowers. Were we really going to descend to vegetation, and might it not possibly be to Durbin Jangal?

Our porters were now strung out all along the L. of C., fetching burtzi which had been sent to the 'Pony Camp,' and going back to the base with letters of instruction for more supplies. Clifford and Cave were having an arduous time at the base. They had been left with 12 porters to get the stores over the Marpo La, but the constant necessity to use most of them to send us up burtzi and food in response to piteous appeals much interfered with their work, and a few men were also unfit to work now and again, further curtailing their few remaining porters.

Whilst waiting to collect our full 12 men again we began sending loads over the Tartar La, and it was not till the 18th that we had sufficient men and supplies to push on. On the 19th we crossed the Tartar La, descended 3000 ft. by steep slopes to a little stream, and at 1 p.m. reached a little patch of grass in which grew flowers which our 'scouts' had brought back—rather like the Dove and the Ark. Mason was keen to get right down to the junction of this stream with the main valley which I had seen on the 6th—another 3 miles or so, so we set off again at 2 p.m. Shortly after this I spotted a herd of burrhel high up a side nullah, and set out on a long stalk as we badly needed meat. After a 2000-ft. climb I got my 'meat' and decided to cut across country to where the camp should now be pitched. After dropping another 3500 ft. and walking 2 miles along the stony valley bottom I arrived at the junction of the valleys at dusk—to find no camp! A weary tramp up stream again—cheered by a beacon lighted on a mound to guide me—brought me, at 8.15, very tired and hungry, to where camp really was. Mason had found the porters too tired to go on, and camp had been pitched within a mile of where I had left them at 1 p.m. Anyhow, 'meat' for some days lay on the hill above and was fetched in next morning, after which we moved down to 'Junction Camp.'

The next day the chief event was hot baths—our first for five weeks! We also explored a mile up stream, but the going got too bad and we had to return. The stream we had now found was really no stream, but a roaring river. In the mornings it would be 200 ft. broad, running in channels, towards evening it would fill the whole 800 ft. breadth of its bed, and we could hear huge boulders being carried down. It must have been very deep by the evenings and quite impassable at any time of the day in its present swollen condition. We



Phot. H. D. Minchinton.

FROM 19,800ft. ABOVE 'DIRTY' GLACIER.
K² and 'Staircase' Peak.



AT POINT 19,500ft. LOOKING S.



Phot. F. Cave.

GASHERBRUM 'BROAD' PEAK AND K².



Phot. H. D. Minchinton.

LOOKING UP KYAGAR GLACIER.

Asparagus Group, 23,000ft.

had left our boat at the Upper Shaksgam, but it would not have availed us and would have been dashed to pieces. Mason was at first convinced that this was the Shaksgam again, and that we were camped at Durbin Jangal and that a few miles up stream would take us to the Gasherbrum glacier. I was always sceptical and in my diary of 22nd have given my reasons against it being the Shaksgam. My reasons were :

(a) That although there is a lot of water, there is not as much as I should expect to find in the middle Shaksgam in August, after it has received the large streams which must flow from the Urdok and other vast glaciers.

(b) If it is the Shaksgam, then the Aghil pass must lie where we could see the river turning W. some 6 miles farther down, and it would be impossible from such a position (the supposed Aghil pass) to see the snout of the Gasherbrum glacier (which Sir F. Younghusband saw from the Aghil pass), owing to the bend of our river a few miles *up* stream ; our height, at the junction, was still over 14,000 ft., where Sir Francis gives Durbin Jangal 12,300 ft.—too great a discrepancy for permissible error.

Unfortunately this was correct, and we had to content ourselves with the discovery of a large tributary to the Shaks-gam, into which it must run some twelve miles farther W.

On this day we moved camp 6 miles down the river, nearly to the point at which it swung due W. Unfortunately, we could not see round the bend, but everything pointed to our being within a few miles of the true Durbin Jangal. After two nights here, during which the river suddenly rose an extra 5 ft. the first night and fell 10 ft. the second, we decided to return to the base in Valley 'I.' We had shot our bolt. The strain was telling appreciably on some members of the party, the porters were showing signs of exhaustion, and our L. of C. now lay through 60 miles over three passes. Neither Clifford nor Cave having had previous experience of snow-work, bad weather on the Sa-Kang La might have meant a complete cessation of supplies from the base, with disastrous results.

On the 24th we went back to Junction Camp, whence the Khan Sahib went a day's march up the river until unable to proceed by an impassable gorge, and definitely proved that it was not the true but the 'Zug (false) Shaksgam.' Although the few days here at 14,000 ft. had been comparatively hot, it snowed that night, and we saw autumn conditions commence.

On the 26th I took a light camp back to the grassy patch—'Green Camp'—to look for fresh meat, but saw no game.

Mason joined me on the 27th, and on the 28th we moved the whole camp to the top of the Tartar La. Here we camped for the night at 18,700 ft.—our highest camp—with the object of seeing sunset and sunrise on K², and a cold night was well rewarded. We were awake an hour before dawn lest we should miss one second of the wonderful spectacle. Whilst the Gasherbrums were still clothed in blackness, the summit of K² became first white, then pink, and lastly golden, looking as if it belonged to another world. From the Tartar La, I took a high level route over a little snow col of about 19,400 ft. by which I reached the Aghil Depsang an hour before the remainder of the party, and was able to obtain a last view of K²—I hope not for ever.

The next day we did a double march—to ‘Dirty-Clean’ in the morning, and thence to the ‘Pony Camp,’ which we reached after dark. We had hoped to find the water in the Sa Lungpa much less by now, but to our disgust it was higher than when we left it three weeks ago. The Khan Sahib had told us that in Hunza the year before the rivers had begun to fall by mid-August, so we had entertained ideas of making another attempt to force the gorge below the ‘Pony Camp.’ I think the late spring snowfall may have kept the rivers at flood level to a later date this year. As this attempt could not be made, and as it looked stormy, we hastened up the Sa Lungpa next day and camped below the W. glacier. On September 1, using Tekhbadur’s route over this glacier—a great improvement on the previous route—we were able to get off the ice of the E. glacier by 2 p.m. With less surface snow the glaciers were much easier than five weeks previously.

During our absence the base camp had been moved 4 miles down Valley ‘I,’ where an excellent place had been formed. We reached this at 4.30 p.m.—completely surprising the other two, who did not know that we were on the way back.

We learnt, then, something of the difficulties which the supporting party had experienced in keeping us supplied. Not only were they always short of porters to get the stores over the Marpo La owing to having to keep men going and coming over the Sa-Kang La to the Pony Camp, but the large sérac at the far end of the Marpo glacier, just above the dump between which and the rock wall lay the somewhat precarious passage, collapsed early in August and made the transport of stores even more difficult. But in spite of all difficulties, and of short rations themselves, they kept us well supplied—though sometimes the supplies arrived, through no fault of theirs—

at the very last moment, when another day without must have meant turning back.

The next day was spent in resting, bathing and darning. The Khan Sahib was impatient to be at work again, however, so on September 3 Cave, he and I with 2 porters started at 8 A.M. for a certain col N. of the camp, and marked on Wood's map at over 19,500 ft.—about 3000 ft. above camp. We reached it at 11.30 by a torrent bed, shale slope and finally 1000 ft. of steep frozen watercourse, in which we had one *mauvais pas*. From the col a névé stretched northwards, interrupting the view which the Khan Sahib required to fill in a blank space between 'I' and 'J.' So we tackled a little rock and snow peak E. of the pass, the summit of which we reached at 1.30 P.M., finding by the Khan Sahib's calculations, and much to his and Cave's joy, that we were at over 20,000 ft.—though Mason, upon our return to camp, thought the Khan Sahib might be over-estimating it. A wonderful 2 hours were spent here—the highest survey station of the expedition,—and then we descended to the col. At one point we had to descend steep rotten rocks very carefully—moving one at a time. This little difficulty took some time for the five of us to negotiate, but 4.45 P.M. saw us back at the col for tea, which was followed by a 1200 ft. slide and run down scree. We were back in camp at 6 P.M.

Two days later we all rode up 'Two Lake Valley' S. of camp. This valley had been previously mapped by Wood, who showed a rock wall at its far end, blocking a possible easy route into the Upper Shaksgam. Clifford and Cave, from the new base, had explored this (as well as in other directions)—[if the word 'exploration' is allowed, as Survey tenets apparently lay down that nothing counts as 'exploration' unless a reliable map is brought back]—and reported that no such wall existed, but that a glacier blocked the descent on the S. side. This error was now corrected, the 'wall' removed from the map and the glacier put in, which certainly formed an efficient barrier for ponies at least to cross by that route. From a hill near by Clifford and Cave had a good view down the Upper Shaksgam to the Kyagar glacier again, and reported that the lake had greatly increased in size and now stretched a good 4 miles up the valley. In this little valley are two small tarns—one of which is a beautiful azure blue, the other grey—hence its name of 'Two Lake Valley.'

Between 'I' and the Upper Shaksgam lay a blank space on Wood's map, which he had hoped Mason would be able to fill

in. This area might have been reached by going up one of the long glaciers coming into 'I' from the S.E. for a few days. The Khan Sahib, Cave and I would have liked to explore these glaciers and fill in the 'blank' during the remaining two weeks to be spent in 'I,' but the opportunity was not given us, and the space still, unfortunately, remains blank.

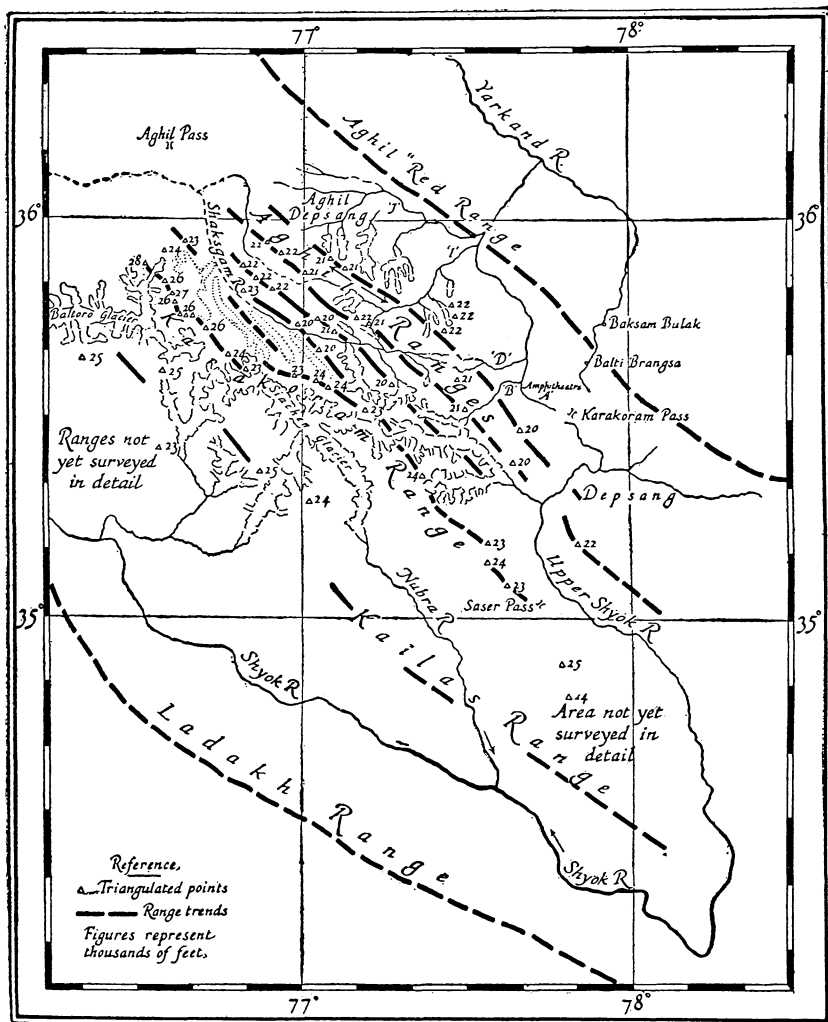
Days of visiting easy cols (mostly rideable to within close distance of their summits) alternated with days of ease or shooting. On the 6th Mason, Cave and I moved a march down the valley to camp at the foot of these cols, which lay on the N. side of the valley. Clifford and Cave had crossed one during August and descended into 'J,' and the topography of the locality required some rectification. Cave and I also ascended a small valley on the right bank—looking for burrhel—and 'removed' another rock wall shown at its head [finding the glacier also different from what the previous map had led us to expect].

Clifford joined us on the 10th. His pleasure did not lie so much in visiting high—or low—cols, but in collecting botanical and geological specimens, and I understand that his collections have furnished valuable information and are well worth the labour he put into the collecting of them. Similarly with Cave's birds, of which he obtained at least one specimen of every bird seen, a great achievement. He often won my admiration by sitting in his cold Whympet tent at the end of the day, with gloveless, freezing hands, skinning specimens, whilst the rest of us were sitting well-begloved round a lamp in our mess tent.

On the 13th the move 'home' began. The remaining 15 ponies went off back via the Yarkand and Pass 'G' to the Upper Shaksgam to fetch the foodstuffs which we had dumped there. We made a short march with the porters towards the Yarkand river. Two days were spent here whilst the porters carried down the rest of our kit, which procedure had to be followed as we moved gradually up the Yarkand river towards Wood's 'Amphitheatre,' where transport from Panamik was to meet us on the 25th. These days were distinguished by very cold winds and some snow at night, the beginning of winter in these inhospitable regions. Our own ponies were caught near Pass 'G' by a bad snowstorm, which we only felt lightly in 'I,' and 3 more died—leaving only 12 of the original 21.

On the 22nd we had our only serious accident. We had collected some specimens of copper ore from a little outcrop

of rotten rock close to camp. It looked very like gold, and in the evening Telakbahadur climbed up to get some for himself.



The rocks above gave way and fell on top of him—resulting in a fractured skull and other less serious injuries. We did not think he would survive the night, but thanks to Clifford's skill, and his own thick Gurkha skull, he did so. This

complicated transport arrangements, as he had to be carried for several days on an improvised blanket stretcher, often in bitter weather, before he was fit to ride a pony, which he could manage just before we reached Sassir Brangsa.

On the 23rd we reached our old camp above the 'amphitheatre,' being gladdened by the arrival of the Panamik transport—29 ponies now instead of 150!—and our own 12 back from Pass 'G.' It snowed on and off all 22nd, 23rd and 24th, but on the 25th we started up valley 'A' and camped not far short of the Karakoram pass. Next day we rejoined the trade route and met several caravans, mostly of camels, crossing the Karakoram pass. We lost another pony this day. We camped near Dualat Beg Öldi that night. From here Cave and I had hoped to take the alternative route to Sassir Brangsa via the Kumdung and Aktash glaciers. There were rumours of a lake forming by the damming of the river here, and it was a great pity that none of us were permitted to go by this route and see this phenomenon, never yet seen by a European. A fortnight later the dam burst and a huge flood swept down the Shyok valley and up the Nubra, causing vast damage and some loss of life. But we had luckily passed out of the Shyok valley before then. These floods have occurred at long intervals in earlier history. However, with 'our noses towards home,' as Mason put it, no splitting up of the party or deviation from the most direct—and tedious—route was permitted.

On the 26th we crossed the Depsang plain in lovely, but cold, weather, and reached Sassir Brangsa on the 30th without incident. The Sassir La had fresh snow on it, but it caused us no trouble, and October 3 saw us back in civilization, if it may be so called, at Panamik. Our first act here was to consume enormous omelettes—having had no eggs for $3\frac{1}{2}$ months. Those Panamik eggs were very luscious!

Two pleasant days were spent here, which included a session in the sulphur bath for which Panamik is famous. The bathing arrangements are highly primitive, but we could not resist the temptation of getting really well boiled and cleaned.

On the 10th we slipped quietly back over the Khardong pass, a very easy matter compared with the large caravan and trying snow conditions four months ago. That afternoon we reached Leh and real civilization in the form of rooms in the 'rest house' and tin baths. We received several kindnesses from the people at the Moravian Mission here. A week at Leh was spent in winding up accounts, paying off our splendid porters and pony men, selling off our remaining ponies, loafing

round the interesting bazaars with their quaint folk, and feeling rather at a loose end and bored !

Cave and I had cherished a plan to relieve part of the monotony of the two weeks' march back to Srinagar by a diversion through Seru, but found it better to let the plan drop. On October 17 we left Leh, and taking the normal stages, reached Dras on the 26th, after some very cold marches. From here Cave and I double-marched ahead, as I was expecting my wife to come up the Sind valley to meet me. Leaving Dras on the 27th, we reached Matzoi that night, crossed the Zoji La early next day and camped below Sonamerg at dusk, which enabled us to reach Kangan, where my wife was awaiting us, on October 29. Here we had a delightful two days' rest.

The party reunited again in Srinagar on November 1, where a further short period was spent in writing reports, disposing of surplus and worn out equipment, and the thousand and one matters pertaining to the winding up of an expedition. On November 12 the party broke up, Mason leaving for Dehra Dun and England, Clifford for Lucknow and England likewise, and Cave and myself returning to our respective regiments.

The whole expedition from Srinagar and back had occupied us a few days under six months.

During this period we had covered in distance something like 1800 miles, mostly on foot.

An area of over 1000 square miles of fairly difficult and previously unexplored mountain country had been mapped and a bit more 'sketched' (*i.e.* mapped fairly accurately). The source of the Shaksgam has at least been definitely placed and the Upper Shaksgam and its branches explored and surveyed. Further, the not inconsiderable masses of the greater portion of the Aghil ranges had been explored and surveyed.

One very interesting point suggested itself—namely, that the Karakoram pass does not lie over any portion of the so-called Karakoram range, but rather over a prolongation of the Aghil range. The Karakoram range proper would appear, both geologically and geographically, to turn S.E. in the neighbourhood of the Sassir La. The mistake, if such it is, may easily be accounted for. Early travellers first crossed the Karakoram pass, to which the name, signifying 'black earth,' was correctly given. The name then became applied in the natural course of events to the huge snow-covered masses extending thence N.W. in the direction of K², so that this range became known as the Karakoram range, though actually the ridge over which the pass crosses has no claim to be

connected with the range of giant peaks culminating in K². The *Geographical Journal* for April 1927 throws much light on this subject.

It was to my mind a great pity that we did not carry out the original intention of descending the Shaksgam as far as the Urdok glacier, thus joining up on the ground with Sir F. Younghusband's route. Owing to the presence of ponies and the lack of grass for them, and to the corresponding small number of porters, this plan would have had certain difficulties, but I have not the slightest doubt that two of us could have carried it out and returned to the base before the waters rose considerably. Knowledge of the great glaciers flowing into the middle Shaksgam, of which we could only see the snouts, would also have been gained.

Mason, however, claims to have done what was required in surveying the middle Shaksgam by the 'Wild' photo-theodolite method, so that the forcing of the Kyagar glacier and the linking up on the ground with Sir F. Younghusband's route would possibly have had more sentimental than practical value, and the plan was therefore abandoned. But I continue to regret it.

I am of the opinion also that to avoid running into difficulties and getting held up by not knowing what lay ahead, longer reconnaissances would have been valuable, involving some days' absence in advance of the 'main body' by certain members of the party, whilst the survey party would have followed up in rear carrying out its work. This might well have proved a saving of time, enabling better preparations to be made to combat what would then have been known difficulties, and thus enabled more ground to have been covered.

This again was made difficult by the shortage of porters, who were all required to shift the main camps and to carry survey apparatus. It was difficult to find any available for an absence of more than a single night, as the ground ahead was rarely known; consequently with the physical difficulties and resulting 'arrangements' troubles had to be dealt with as they were met, resulting in delay at times.

That no small value is attributed by the R.G.S. to the result of the expedition is evidenced by the award of the 'Founder's Medal' to Mason, to whom the greatest praise is due for the preparation of the expedition, on the care and thoroughness of which the ultimate success must so largely depend.

I understand that all the collections made are proving of value, connecting up what is already known of flora and fauna in other districts.

I should like again to pay tribute to Khan Sahib Afraz Gul. If the success of the exploration was in large measure due to Mason's preparations, the palm for hard work 'in the field' must certainly be given to the Khan Sahib, without whom we should have had a far more difficult time on the march, and but for whose hours of labour, on hillside and ridge, the plane table map would have suffered very considerably.

No better 'followers' could have been found than our Ladaki porters, who worked splendidly, and last, but not least, praise is due to our two Kashmiri cooks, who never seemed too tired nor too cold to get us a hot meal whatever the length of march or weather conditions.

On the whole the weather was kind to us ; a few snowstorms, of little intensity, interfered with survey work on occasions, but never really embarrassed our comfort. Of course it was cold—that was to be expected—but the physical discomfort never approached what I had anticipated it might be. Accidents were rare, and excepting the serious one to Telakbahadur, were confined to a few bruised limbs and falls into streams. Health remained excellent, and we returned to Srinagar in excellent physical condition—merely without any surplus adipose tissue !

I do not think the effect of $3\frac{1}{2}$ months at over 16,000 ft. had much appreciable mental effect on us, except the occasional 'growse' of some of us that we seemed to be served with as much physical work as we were capable of performing. Certainly, some of the jolly days and evenings we had in Srinagar after the party broke up, during the few extra days some of us spent there before returning to our regimental labours, must have dispelled the idea of any altitude depression, or other effects.

We undoubtedly became acclimatised to exertion at a fairly high altitude, and increased in powers of going up hill. Cave's improvement was particularly noticeable, and our day on September 3, at the end of our fourth month, 'in the field,' to over 20,000 ft. and back, caused but little distress to any of that party.

Within ten days of the breaking up of the expedition we were all back at our normal duties again.

A word as to the fauna may be interesting. The game was not nearly so varied nor so plentiful as we had hoped with regard to the larder. In many valleys we were astonished at the quantity of game tracks, though we saw comparatively little game. This is accounted for by the paucity of grass, which causes the animals to be always on the move searching

for fresh grass and making numbers of tracks. Tracks were particularly plentiful in Valley 'I' and in the 'Zug-Shaksgam.' In the winter it would appear that Valley 'I' is a sanctuary for all sorts of game—being open, catching the sun and containing more grass than all the other valleys put together. This valley appears to be a wintering place for burrhel, wolves and probably wild yak. Two small herds of kiang were seen, but from the tracks there must be a large number of the animals earlier. There were apparent tracks of these in the 'Zug-Shaksgam' also, though, in spite of the large number of tracks of all sorts, the only game seen there was one large herd of burrhel. Burrhel was the animal most frequently and most widely met with, and afforded welcome meat for those of us who liked it.

The Tibetan antelope appears to range much farther west than previously recorded. They evidently come into the Upper Yarkand valley very early and breed there, as when we reached it at the end of June the kids appeared to be 6 to 8 weeks old. The males were found mostly apart from the females. We found a small herd of females, some with kids, as far W. as the Aghil Depsang.

When we next came into the Yarkand valley at the end of September, the migration eastward had begun again, and we were only in time to catch the tail end of the trek. The males, unlike the females, do not appear to travel W. of the Yarkand river. Antelope makes most excellent eating.

We found hares in most valleys—up to 18,000 ft.—beautiful creatures with long grey hair. More than one was caught by hand when sheltering under boulders. Small mouse-hares were also found. Once we saw tracks of a few wolves (in the Yarkand valley) and traces of a lynx or snow leopard close by.

As I have stated, Cave made a most valuable and comprehensive collection of birds, as did Clifford of flora and minerals. I understand that my small collection of butterflies is of interest on account of the height at which some specimens were found.

Small black spiders, in large quantities, were about the only ect of this kind met with.

We are indebted to the Council of the R.G.S. and to Major Menneth Mason for permission to reproduce the map accompanying this paper, prepared by the members of the expedition, which will be found at the end of this Volume.—EDITOR.]

NOTE ON MAJOR MINCHINTON'S PAPER.

BY FRANCIS YOUNGHUSBAND.

MAJOR MASON'S Shaksgam Expedition accomplished its main object. It extended the accurate triangulation of the Himalayan region across the main watershed north of K_2 , and it determined the source of the Shaksgam River and its approximate course from its source to the junction with it of the Urdok glacier valley which I ascended in 1889. But, without jeopardizing the main object of the Expedition, the members were not able to descend the river to the Urdok glacier and this evidently caused Minchinton much disappointment. I have looked up the river to their furthest point and they have looked down the river to my furthest point, but we have not actually touched hands. Again, they followed down a tributary—the Zug Shaksgam—nearly to the junction with the Shaksgam, and I crossed it at its junction, but here also we do not actually touch.

There therefore remains an interesting little piece of minor exploration still to be done—a rare chance for a subaltern with a few months leave. In both 1887 and 1889 I was on the Shaksgam in September; and I am inclined to think that that month is the best time to be there, because the water is then at its lowest. I may add that in 1887 I did not use a tent: my men and I slept in the open the whole way from the last village in Turkestan to the first village in Baltistan, namely Askoli. At that season it is therefore quite possible to travel very lightly. A light tent might be taken over the Karakoram Pass as far as may be, but then, for a dash down the Shaksgam, if the worst comes to the worst, it might very well be discarded.

How far the adventurous subaltern should go will depend on time and opportunity, but he should try at least to reach Durbin Jangal and explore from there up the Zug Shaksgam to Mason's farthest point so as to connect up. He should note that the very prominent peak he will see from Durbin Jangal is Staircase Peak and not K_2 , as I thought. (The existence of Staircase Peak was not known in my day, and I presumed therefore that the peak I saw was K_2 .) And he should at all costs rack his brains to breaking point to find words with which to describe what he sees. For he will be in the very

midst of what is perhaps the grandest scenery in the whole Himalaya ; and what we unfortunates who now have to stay at home want is a good description of those glorious mountains and not long and weary accounts of everything else except the one distinctive feature of the region.

I have spoken of exploring rather than climbing ; but there is, of course, climbing *ad lib.* to be done in that region. At Durbin Jangal there is—or was thirty-eight years ago—plenty of scrub for firewood and a fair amount of grass, and from the heights above it must be views of K₂ and the Gasherbrum peaks which must exceed in grandeur anything else in the Himalaya—and therefore in the world—except perhaps the view of Everest from close by it on the southern side which no one yet has seen.

LES ÉCRINS AND MONT PELVOUX.

An unpublished letter from the late Miss Gertrude Bell.

[We offer our grateful thanks to Lady Bell and to Sir Ernest Benn for the privilege of being allowed to publish this letter, which does not appear in 'Letters of Gertrude Bell.'—*Editor, A.J.*]

LA GRAVE,
Monday, Sept. 4, 1899.

DEAREST FATHER,—I have been looking forward for the last twenty-four hours to the moment when I should be able to pour into the ears of my family a full account of my adventures. My tour has been brought to a most successful conclusion, so now for the longest letter in the world ! The truth, the whole truth, and—well, perhaps a little more than the truth, shall we say ! I wrote to Elsa from La Béarde on Thursday morning.

I spent a peaceful afternoon reading Whymper's terrible account of the first ascension of the Écrins and left about 5 for the Refuge du Carrelet in order to try them myself. We turned up a valley to the right and followed up the stream for an hour and a quarter. The valley was narrow and desolate beyond words, your view headed off in all directions by glaciers. All the valleys on this side of the mountains are wild, narrow and inhospitable, bare of verdure and uninhabited. The Refuge



Phot. Alfred Holmes.

LES ÉCRINS, S. FACE,
from Pic Coolidge.

stands most picturesquely against a great rock at the junction of two torrents, a wood of rather stumpy fir trees climbing up behind it. It's just like the Châtelleret, but more enclosed by rock and wood. Its great fault is that it stands far too low down.

When I arrived I found Prince Louis of Orléans sitting on a stone watching for me. He had come over the Brèche that day and had heard in La Bérarde of my moves. He looks absurdly young, but he is old enough to be an officer in the Austrian army. He spoke English rather badly, French and German very well, but his native language I discovered is Portuguese. He's nothing of an Alpinist, though he has been at it 4 seasons. He had with him Faure and his son and an English servant, who climbed very well, smoking a pipe all the time! We sat on a stone and talked while Faure cooked his soup, and when it was ready he invited me to dine with him, which, as there was only one saucepan and I should have had to wait some time, I promptly did. *Und wie!* I was hungry. While we were dining my two Germans arrived and proceeded to cut and eat an excellent dinner outside. We sat on rocks and all talked the while, and all exchanged addresses that we might subsequently exchange photographs, for we all had cameras with us. As for the night, *vide passim*, except that I slept soundly and was much annoyed when at midnight the guides began to get up. We drank chocolate and a little before 1 we were all off, my caravan leading. The night was quite clear, but the way up the gorge very dark. We kept our lanterns till about 4, when we got on to the glacier. It was a very long way up through the wood—the Refuge ought to be at the top of it—and then long *éboulis* and *névés*.

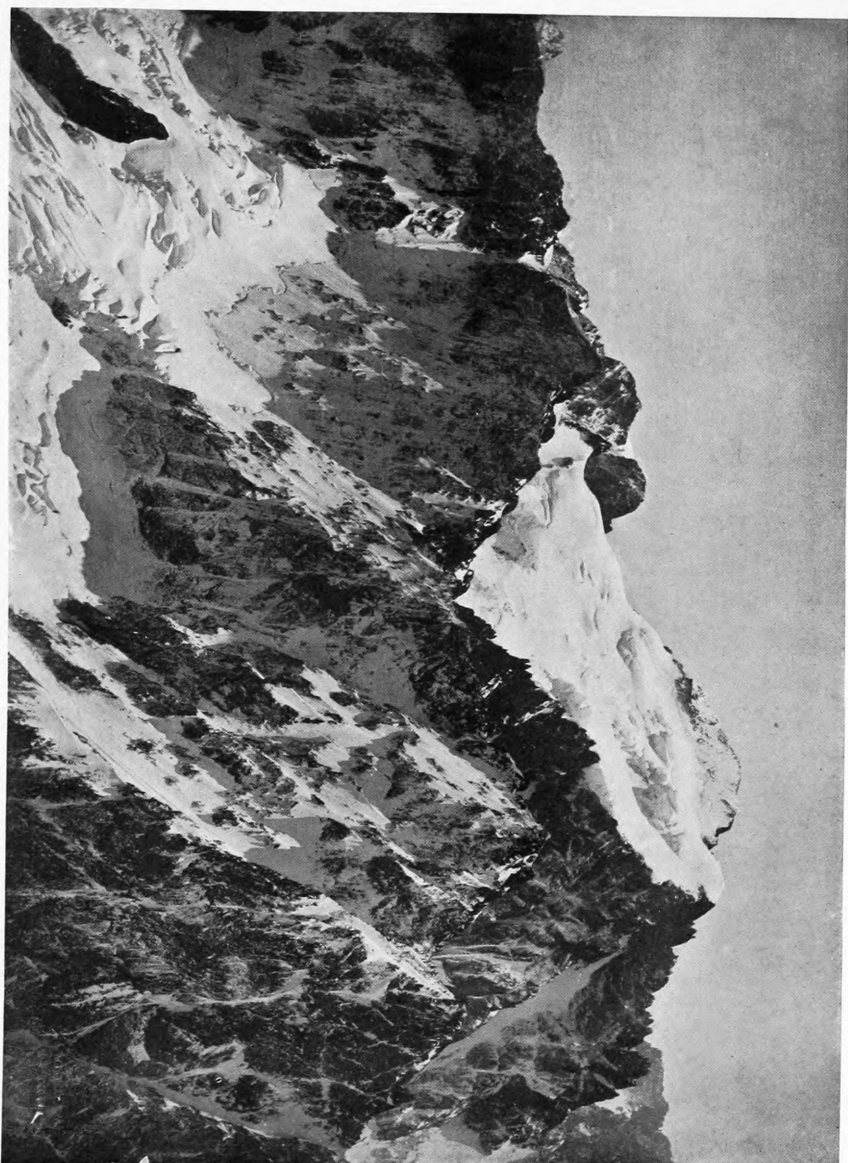
The guides went awfully slowly and stopped to rest several times, which was boring. We roped on the glacier, it was precious cold with a wind. Presently the peaks on the opposite side of the valley turned scarlet, but we got no sun until we came on to a snow col between the Écrins and a peak called the Fife—the Col des Avalanches it is called. An extraordinarily steep slope of ice, which has only been done once, leads down on to the Glacier Noir, and looking over it we saw a sea of soft white cloud beneath us, with the sun walking straight across. We turned to the left, crossed a little schrund and got on to the rock, where we sat down, shaded from the sun but not from the wind, and had a hearty meal. You observe that I have recovered a mountain appetite! It was here that I made the sad discovery that my excellent bottle of fresh lemonade had

been left behind at the Refuge ! The good Germans gave me some of theirs.

It was awfully cold, we didn't linger to digest, but skirts off, and straight up the rock, Mathon still leading. When we were about 10 minutes up Marnis dropped his axe. It fortunately stuck on the edge of the schrund and Prince Louis's porter went down to fetch it. It was a most disagreeable ten minutes. I doubled up and sat on my hands and my feet and froze at discretion. However, the rock soon warmed us. It was very pleasant going, very steep but good rock, not as difficult as the Meije. There was a wire rope on the only bad place, and even that we could easily have passed without any extra help. In an hour or so we turned a corner and got into the sun, which was great bliss. We were far ahead, so we sat down on a little ledge on which Mathon had once passed a night of mist and *verglas* and waited for the others.

Opposite to us, so near that one felt one might throw a stone across, towered the Pelvoux, the Pic sans Nom and the Ailefroide. We started off again, Prince Louis in front, and had a very agreeable couple of hours over ice slopes, awfully steep down, broken by small rocky *arêtes*. The only drawback was that these were extremely rotten and one had to go with immense precaution, both for oneself and for the others. At one moment, as I stepped on to a rock, away it came and in an instant I was on my back on the ice ; it wasn't at all alarming, because my rope was quite tight, but I cut my finger, and poor Mathon, who was holding hard on to a sharp rock, which broke under his hand, cut himself rather badly. Germany to the rescue as usual. Dr. Pauleke produced a bandage for him and sticking-plaster for me, and we went gaily on. Many photographs were taken at this period. They will be not a little comic. We next came to some long couloirs of bad rock, and this was rather tedious, for the Orléans caravan sent down clouds of stones, so that we had to let them get to the top of each couloir before we started. Then we five went on together. It was very cold waiting. These rocks finally brought us to the summit at 10 o'clock.

The Écrins is shaped like a spoon which has been cut off half-way down the bowl ; we had come up the edge of the spoon on the west and incurved side. The top is a most satisfactory top, sharp and so thin that you can't think how it stands at all. The day was clearer than on the Meije ; we saw the Matterhorn, the Dent Blanche, a whole line of great peaks. We stayed for about an hour and a quarter, ate an enormous



Phot. V. Sella.

LES ÉCRINS, N. FACE
from Grande Ruine.

lunch, took photographs and slept—at least I did for quite 20 minutes. Then we went off over the top of the spoon and down the other side, which is completely covered with snow leading down on to the great Glacier Blanc, which is the largest I have seen in Dauphiné. The Germans led and had to make the steps down a very long and almost precipitous slope of ice. Fortunately it was pretty thickly coated with snow, in excellent condition, so that there was not much ice cutting to do. Even so we waited three-quarters of an hour or more to give them a start, and I slept peacefully the while.

It took us a good half-hour to get down the first slope (—when I say slope!) of snow, backwards straight down. My left hand, which I had to put into the step above me, speedily lost all sensation, which was rather a comfort, as the feelings it had before enjoyed were not pleasant; but when I came to the bottom I found that three of my fingers were frost-bitten. There are still enormous sore blisters on them. The wind blew merrily and the snow swept round in clouds—it was intolerably cold. However, at last it ended in a great big enormous schrund, and I thought I never should let myself down round the corner of it, but I did after all. I was now in rags, so I put on my skirt for decency—at least Mathon did, for I couldn't feel at all with my fingers (you know this is all quite true!). We went on down endless slopes of ice with a thin coating of snow on them, jumped down two little schrunds (one of which Prince Louis descended on his back, for his porter jumped without giving fair warning). I heard the English servant call out, 'I've 'old of the rope, sir,' in exactly the same voice as he would have said that his shaving water was ready (it sounded so funny); and at last, at last we were down on the Glacier Blanc.

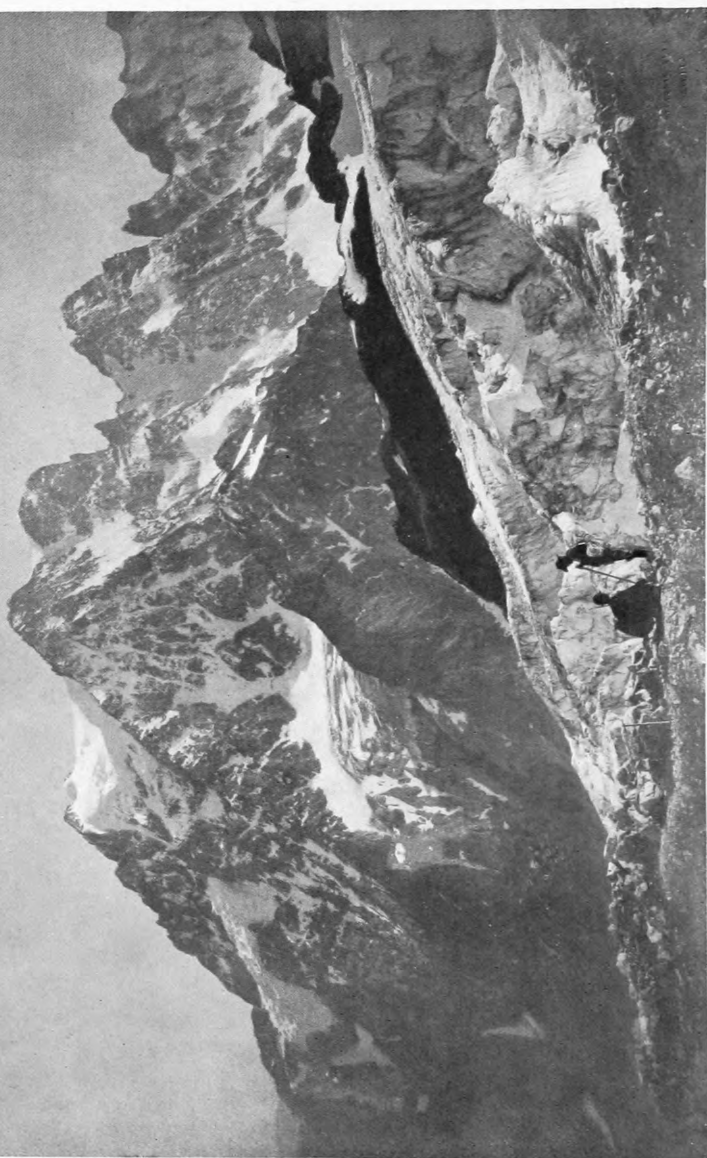
I didn't distinguish myself during that descent. I fell quite flat on my back twice. I'm a dreadful duffer at ice (but rather good at rock by this time!). We found the Germans sitting in the delicious sun, on their knapsacks, waiting for us, and we sat down too in the middle of the glacier and ate up all the rest of the provisions with extreme cheerfulness (but my fingers were painful and rubbing them in the snow torture) and waved our hands to the Orléans party, who came down far behind us and passed over the Col des Écrins at the head of the glacier, making for La Bérarde. We, however, turned to the right down the great glacier between the Écrins and its *contre-forts* and all those peaks and cols of which one sees the other side from the Refuge de l'Alpe.

An hour or so brought us to enormous séracs, where we unroped and tracked down rock and loose stones to the Refuge Tuckett, which is a disgusting little hole. A little lower down Mathon lost the way, and while he looked for it we sat and observed the scenery. (It was quite 5 o'clock by this time.) There is an extraordinary Alpine view here ; I'll try and make you understand. The two glaciers come together at the Pré de Madame Carle, a little oasis of stumpy trees and patches of grass on which stands the Refuge Cézanne, and one is all snow and the other is all stones, the fact being that the line of peaks, Pelvoux, etc., and that side of the Écrins are so steep that there is no place for the snow to accumulate. Mathon found the way and we almost wished he hadn't, it was such a beast—an endless rock, very very steep, there is an enormous drop between the Refuge Tuckett and the Refuge Cézanne.

It was dusk when we got to the bottom ; we marched bravely on through the growing dark over *éboulis* and the rockiest of paths, and my fingers hurt like—no, blazes, I was going to say, but freezes would be better ; and I had hurt my foot on a rock, too, and I can't think why it wasn't more disgusting than it was. We got in at 8, having lighted our lanterns again half an hour before, and I never saw anything more delightful than the open door of the inn. The good Hippolyte Rodier had arrived and advised them of our coming to such purpose that twelve *couverts* had been spread for us ! The shortest of toilettes and then the largest of dinners. We were extremely merry, for we felt we had a real good day's mountaineering behind us ; but it was too long—19 hours, one gets so sick of it. I wasn't badly tired at all, no aches except my fingers, an enormous appetite, and how I slept ! But it's too long all the same. I like the Meije better too ; it's more interesting. Next morning I was perfectly brisk and down to breakfast at 9.30, which I thought a good performance. My Germans were down before me, bless them !

Ailefroide is lovely ; it stands on the tiniest bit of green at the junction of two valleys. The inn (which is much less good than La Bérarde, but not very bad), a church and one or two hovels make up the whole place. There are patches of firs in the fields and climbing up the hillsides. We had a thunderstorm at twelve, but at two it cleared and I decided to go on, Ailefroide not being a place to make a long stay in. The Germans also decided to go.

I started at 3.15 up the other valley, which leads down to Ailefroide—very very steep and narrow and very beautiful.



Phot. V. Sella.

PELVOUX AND PIC SANS NOM.
Séras of Glacier Blanc in foreground.

We presently turned straight up the hillside to our right and at 6.30 reached the Refuge Lemer cier after a long pull up. It lies almost at the foot of the glaciers of the Pelvoux. I found there two young French officers—I had heard at the inn that they had gone up. One—he was rather nice—came out to meet me and presented himself in great form; the other was extremely grumpy. He retired at once to bed, I think he had a chill. The Refuge is a good one with a sleeping-room and a cooking-room. Mathon made my soup, and the nice officer talked to me while I supped. It was after dark when the Germans arrived and I talked to them while they supped and then went to bed—on a mattress!—and slept most soundly till three.

This was Sunday morning. The two Frenchmen were off half an hour before us, they went a different way and we never saw them again. They hadn't reached the top when we were there, for there were no traces in the snow. I expect they are still in some couloir. This was a day of illness. Dr. Paulcke had had fever all night; he started out to make the ascent looking like a rag and turned back after ten minutes. So Lohmüller joined my caravan. There was a most wonderful sunrise on a sea of cloud, all the peaks quite clear. We crossed the tail of the glacier, some stones and some névés, and when we got to the foot of the arête Mathon broke down. We begged him to stop there, but he insisted on coming half-way up and then gave way altogether. So Lohmüller, Marnis and I went on to the top, one and a half hours of arête, quite easy but bad rock, half an hour of very good easy glacier. The whole ascent from the hut was only four and a quarter hours and the descent about two and a half. We came down a tremendous pace, Lohmüller leading and I flying after amidst showers of stones. However, no one was hurt. The rope was pretty much anyhow, mostly between my feet, I think. We found Mathon better and we all returned to the hut together, with good glissades down the névés. Dr. Paulcke was also better. It was perfectly delicious at the Refuge; we produced all our provisions and had lunch in common, and then I lay on the rocks and slept for an hour. We left at two and I got in at seven, but the Germans stopped by the way and cooked their own dinner out of doors. They came in while I was having mine and we chatted on till nearly nine, when I went to bed. I haven't seen them to-day, for they were not up when I left this morning, and I think they meant to sleep at Le Monétier.

This day, *nämlich*, has been one of the nicest I had had.

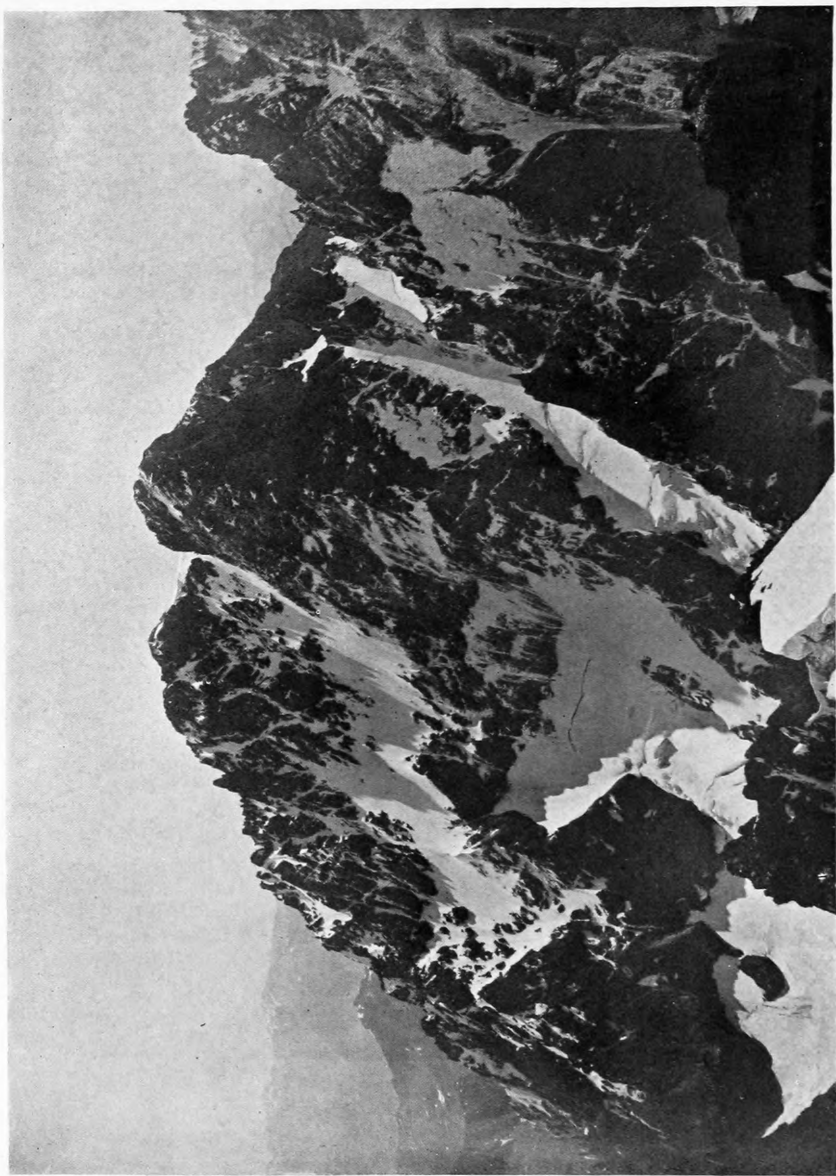
We left Ailefroide at five ; the valley got wider and more pleasing as we went down, and it was perfectly charming walking by the edge of the river over grass and through woods. After an hour or so we turned up and over a heavenly little grassy col—the Col des Chaudins. We got to the top at 8.30 and looked all across the Guisane valley, the Galibier opposite and Le Monétier at our feet. The way down lay all through pine woods, too nice for words, and when I arrived at ten M. Izoard received me with open arms. I went down to the Établissement des Bains and had a delicious hot bath—all the people were much excited at seeing me again. Then I had the most excellent lunch—you remember how good everything is there—and left by the diligence at 11.45, getting here at three. Rather a nice old French couple were lunching and coming on here. I have been sitting with them after dinner outside. Two caravans have done the Meije to-day. One consisted of two young Germans without a guide. They sat opposite to me at dinner and told me all their adventures.

Now I must tell you that M. Izoard let the wife of our purse friend know that I was there and she came to thank me for the 100 francs and send messages to you. Izoard then took me to her house to see her children—four of them, two boys and two girls. The youngest boy is a delicate little soul and since babyhood his one idea has been to become a priest. But they can't pay for his instruction. They want two hundred francs to carry them through the next three years ; then, Izoard says, they can manage. The little boy stood by with big shining eyes while Izoard told me this tale and the mother, who is a good speechless sort of peasant woman, looking awfully old and worn, wrung her hands and asked if you would help. I talked the matter over with Izoard afterwards and said I would tell you about it. He says they are very decent people and that the money would not be thrown away. The boy has a fixed idea and besides he is too delicate to work in the fields. They are terribly poor—they just keep alive with the hardest work. I arranged with Izoard that if you liked to do anything for them, the money should pass through his hands. It would be rather funny if the end of the purse adventure were to be that you should have added another priest to the world !

I think I'll now finish these few remarks. Goodbye, beloved family.

Ever your affectionate daughter,

GERTRUDE.



Phot. V. Sella.

MONT PELVOUX, N.W. OR GLACIER NOIR FACE.

CHARMOZ AND GRÉPON.

By GEORGE H. MORSE,

I HAVE been asked to jot down some notes on the early history of these two peaks, which are probably the most popular in the Chamonix district to-day and of which some record may be worth preserving in the JOURNAL. I am writing with a certain amount of personal knowledge, but if I have omitted any early ascent by any member of ours or of any foreign club, I am sure that the Editor of the ALPINE JOURNAL would be very glad if it were reported to him.

Up till 1892, when M. Louis Kurz's *Climbers' Guide* to the Chain of Mont Blanc was published, these two peaks were classified as one and called the 'Charmoz,' but there is, of course, a very distinct gap between them, and gradually, at the Montenvers anyhow, the two peaks came to be regarded as separate, possibly because the traverse of the Charmoz can be seen from that hotel, while the Grépon is behind and invisible. Both peaks are similar in character, a rocky ridge with several pinnacles, running roughly from N. to S., and in each case the highest point is the last but one to the S. But the 'steps' are not the same, since you can traverse the Charmoz either way with a 60 ft. spare rope, while on the Grépon at least an 100 ft. is wanted. The gap or col between the Charmoz and the Grépon is now known as the Charmoz-Grépon Col, and is flanked at the top by a *chevaux de frise* of rocky points, a sort of elongation of the Charmoz ridge. The col to the S., or rather S.W., of the Grépon is the Col de Blaitière,¹ and this must be reached if ascending the Grépon from the S.

The usual routes for both peaks are by way of the Glacier des Nantillons, which lies to the W., and both cols are reached by this glacier. To the E. of the peaks lies the Mer de Glace.

The early attempts are difficult to unravel now; they seem to have been mostly directed at the Grépon, but there is no doubt that the spot known as 'C.P.', a little higher than the

¹ This col is now called 'Col des Nantillons' (see Vallot Guide, I, *Les Aiguilles de Chamonix*, 1925, p. 75), but as it was still called 'Col de Blaitière' in Kurz's Guide, 1892, I prefer to retain that name.

Col de Blaitière, was reached many years before the first ascent of either peak. I have been unable to ascertain the date when the letters 'C.P.' were painted, but they are said to be the initials of the guides J. E. Charlet and Prosper Payot, who took part in the attempts made in the early 'seventies. Both were in the conquest of the Petit Dru, but Charlet was not Charlet-Straton at this time (*Kurz*, 3rd Edition, p. 268, footnote). Some height above the Charmoz-Grépon Col was also attained on the Grépon (see 'A.J.' **10**, 399, footnote), but I do not think that any attempt got higher than C.P. on the S. side, or the rocks at the foot of the slabs near the 'Mummery' chimney on the N. side, till we come to the ascent of a N. point of the Charmoz by Mummery in 1880.

AIGUILLE DES GRANDS CHARMOZ, 3445 m.=11,303 ft., *Vallot*.

The first ascent of any of the five main points of the Charmoz was made by the late Mr. A. F. Mummery with Alexander Burgener and Benedict Venetz on July 15, 1880 ('A.J.' **10**, 95 and **16**, 159). They ascended by way of the Nantillons Glacier. Going up the Charmoz-Grépon Couloir for a short distance and passing across the face of the mountain towards the N., they climbed the well-known ice chimney, reaching the gap between the two northernmost points. They first ascended the N. point, 3427 m. (*Vallot*, I., plate, p. 38), and finding it lower than the one to the S., returned to the gap and ascended point 3431 m. It is possible, although uncertain, that they passed this point and ascended the next one, 3435 m., but beyond this they certainly did not go. They returned by the route of their ascent (Mummery, 'My Climbs in the Alps,' p. 96 *et seq.*).

The next point to the S. is now called *La Carrée*, 3439 m., then comes the *Bâton Wicks*, 3444 m., and then some way further to the S. the true summit of the Grands Charmoz, 3445 m., and last of all the S. point, 3444 m.

Burgener left his axe on the highest point attained by them, which was not retrieved till 1885 by M. Dunod's party (*Mummery*, p. 110).

The next ascent, and first ascent of the highest point, 3445 m., was made by MM. H. Dunod and P. Vignon with four guides on August 9, 1885, from the top of the Charmoz-Grépon Col, now the ordinary route. M. Dunod appears to have followed Mummery's route some three weeks later, Sept. 2, and retrieved Burgener's ice-axe ('A.J.' **13**, 197).



Phot. Alfred Holmes.

CHARMOZ AND GRÉPON.

A further advance was made two years later. On Aug. 9, 1887, Messrs. W. Muir and J. H. Wicks with Emile Rey and J. Fischer followed Dunod's route to the top (second ascent) and, continuing N. along the ridge, made the first ascent of the point now known as Bâton Wicks, 3444 m., returning by the way they ascended.

Then, on Sept. 10, 1887, Mr. T. P. H. Jose with F. Simond and P. Burnet followed Mummery's route and made the first traverse of the mountain from N. to S. ('A.J.' 13, 408).

After 1887 the peak was beginning to get known. I have been unable to ascertain who first traversed it from S. to N., still it was probably done not long after 1888. I was under the impression that Emile Rey, with M. Dunod, was the first to make this traverse. M. Dunod, however, states that he never traversed (Vallot, I, p. 32), so I hope that further information will be forthcoming.

I will add only four more items which may be worth recording. Probably the first guideless ascent of the Grands Charmoz (3445 m.) was made by H. W. Henderson, J. H. Wicks, C. Wilson and myself on August 3, 1889 ('A.J.' 33, 105).

On July 30, 1890, Wicks, Ellis Carr and I repeated Jose's expedition, making, I believe, the first guideless traverse from N. to S.

In 1892 Mummery records the same expedition (*Mummery*, p. 119) as the first traverse from N. to S. by ladies, Miss Bristow and Miss Pasteur being in his party, while on August 10, 1893, Wicks, Wilson, Kesteven and I with Miss Pasteur and Miss M. Pasteur traversed from S. to N., the first traverse, I think, by ladies in the opposite direction.

I have purposely omitted any new routes found up this peak in later years, such as Mr. Thorold's ascent in 1899, from the E., as they are all recorded in the ALPINE JOURNAL, and the Vallot Guide.

AIGUILLE DE GRÉPON, 3482 m. = 11,424 ft., *Vallot*.

The early history of the Grépon is perhaps even more fascinating than that of the Charmoz, partly because it is a more difficult climb, and partly because the Chamonix guides appear to have had superstitions about it.

As in the case of the Charmoz, a minor point was first ascended, the first ascent of any of the Grépon points being made by the brothers, Messrs. Francis M. and Gerald W.

Balfour² with J. Petrus and P. Knubel on July 19, 1881. They ascended the Nantillons Glacier to the Col de Blaitière, and, gaining C.P., crossed the chasm below, climbing to the gap between the highest point, 3482m., and the most southern point, 3475m. ('A.J.' 10, 397). They were unable to scale the highest point, but with difficulty got up the point to the S. of the gap, which is now known as *Pointe Balfour* (Vallot, p. 72).

The next attempt was made by Mummery with Alexander Burgener and B. Venetz on August 3, 1881. Their attempt was made from the N. They ascended to the Charmoz-Grépon Col and went up to the gap in the arête, discovering the 'Mummery' chimney some 20 ft. lower and to the W. of the gap. They climbed this, Venetz leading, and followed the arête to the N. point, 3478 m., beyond which there is a big drop in the arête. They returned by the same route.

They were doubtful whether a point to the S. was not slightly higher (*Mummery*, p. 131), so they returned on August 5, and following their previous route, descended the big drop—the Grand Gendarme of the Vallot Guide—using a doubled rope, and continued to the highest point, which they ascended with difficulty by the famous 'Venetz' chimney on the N.E. side which emerges directly under the summit. The easier way now followed is a few feet on the W. side. They returned by the same way, having made the first ascent of the Grépon, 3482 m. ('A.J.' 16, 166).

We next find M. H. Dunod with F. and G. Simond and A. Tairraz attacking the mountain in August 1885, described in a paper entitled 'A Month on the Grépon' in the 1885 C.A.F. *Annuaire* (see 'A.J.' 13, 197).

Monsieur Dunod's energies were chiefly directed from the S. by the Balfours' route. On the first occasion, having arrived at the gap between the highest point and *Pointe Balfour*, they failed to reach the top; they seem to have recompensed themselves by making the second ascent of *Pointe Balfour*. They appear to have had ladders with them (*Mummery*, p. 135), and on Sept. 2, 1885, they made the second ascent of the highest point, or the first ascent by the S. route.

I think the credit of this ascent must be given to François Simond. The 'Dunod' chimney up which they eventually climbed is not visible from the Grépon-Balfour gap. It lies

² Brothers of Mr. Arthur J. Balfour, now Earl of Balfour, K.G., O.M.

on the Nantillons side and is separated from the gap by a buttress or little ridge running W. from the main peak to reach the foot of which you must descend a small rock couloir skirting the S. side of this buttress. Simond gained a point on the buttress well above the gap, and saw that the way up was by the chimney on the N. side of the buttress, and that the lowest step overhung. By means of an ingenious procedure (of which more anon) he was able to throw a doubled rope over a knob, some 20 ft. beyond him, so that it hung down the chimney. By the help of this they were able to pass the overhang and so reach the summit.

The next attempt was my own on August 1, 1889, with Ulrich and Hans Almer. The Charmoz was then getting talked about at the Montenvers as a good climb, and we knew that Mummery had ascended the Grépon from the Charmoz-Grépon Col, but we had little idea where his chimney was. We were somewhat ambitious and reached the Grands Charmoz top at 9 A.M. Returning to the Charmoz-Grépon Col, it took us one hour to cut steps in very hard ice to the gap near the Mummery chimney. We failed to notice the latter, and spent some time on the E. side looking for it. There we found a couple of plugs of wood stuck in a crevice on a great slab and concluded that there must lie the way. These plugs must have been left by some of the early explorers. From the top of the slab we got with some difficulty on to a very narrow ledge about 10 ft. higher. Hans was then pushed up as far as we could reach; he then wormed up another 12 ft. or so and stuck. He said he might bear off to the left if he could find a foothold. Ulrich was pushed up, and getting below Hans was able to stretch out his left hand and make the necessary foothold. Even then it was touch and go; but Hans slowly moved up, and, getting to better holds, reached the platform above the well-known hole, Burgener's 'Kanonenloch.' With the rope held above, Ulrich soon followed and all was well. It would be difficult to speak too highly of Hans's brilliant rock climbing on this occasion, for it certainly was a very ticklish place and I am not sure that I enjoyed standing, unroped, on that narrow ledge, with the two guides scrambling above me.

The moment Ulrich looked through the hole he pointed to the top of the Mummery chimney and exclaimed that there was the way we ought to have come up. We took it on our descent and found it far preferable to our ascent.

From the hole we traversed at once round to the Nantillons side, and swarming up one of those granite *à chevaux*, presently

got back to the arête. The view down the cliffs to the Nantillons Glacier from this point was most impressive and magnificent, and we duly reached the N. point, as Mummery in his first attempt, at 2.30 p.m.

The plan of carrying ample spare rope was not so much in vogue in those days, and the guides basing the difficulties on those we had passed, decided it was too late to try and go any further. As it was we only reached the Montenvers at 10 p.m.

The third ascent was made by Mr. J. H. Wicks with F. Simond and Zurbriggen on August 9, 1889, by the Dunod chimney. Wicks always told me that on this occasion, when they reached the Grépon-Balfour gap, Simond took him down to the bottom of the Dunod chimney, and told him to wait there till he, Simond, was ready. Simond got his doubled rope fixed fairly quickly, and they then made the ascent. Wicks had no idea how the rope was arranged, and that was the reason of our guideless attempts later.

In February of this year, 1927, Dr. C. Wilson kindly sent me a note-book belonging to Wicks, in which the latter wrote: 'I did not see how the guides got on to the ledge,³ they went together, Zurbriggen being left on it to put the rope as far forward as possible. It must have been fastened firm in some way. When François was up he pulled the thick rope after him and Zurbriggen returned without any rope. Was the ledge³ easy to reach and descend from, or had they a ladder stowed away somewhere on the Mer de Glace side?'

I never saw this note of Wicks's till this year, and it quite bears out what he told me as mentioned above.

On August 1, 1890, Ellis Carr, Wicks and I started off to solve the problem of fixing the rope. Wicks knew the way and we soon arrived at C.P. The plan previously followed there was to leave a short rope hanging N. of the stone bridge; you then descended a little way, using a hand traverse to cross the gap and get on to the peak proper. This route was, I believe, always used till Captain Farrar's descent in 1893. We soon got to the Grépon-Balfour gap, and not seeing any way of fixing a rope, went down the little couloir to the foot of the Dunod chimney, but failed utterly to pass the overhang.

We returned to the gap and proceeded, like M. Dunod, to climb Pointe Balfour, which we estimated as about 15 ft. lower

³ I think that Wicks ought to have used the word 'ridge' or 'buttress' here.—G. H. M.

than the true summit. We had our reward, for on the top, looking across at the Grépon, we spied a piton fixed high up on the opposite wall, some 20 ft. above the gap.

This gave us so much hope that we returned to the charge on August 4, and were a very long time in getting to the piton ; in fact we only succeeded by one of us going to the end of a wide ledge which lies on the Mer de Glace side just through the gap and is immediately under the summit. We then slung the climbing rope over a small bulge in the rock face, which gave some sort of hand-hold for the right hand. We put the rope through the piton, then doubling it, threw it over a shoulder on the buttress, but although it came to the bottom of the Dunod chimney, it did not hang down the centre, coming instead in a slanting direction from the right and being consequently useless. Wicks was sure that there was something more to be done. It then began to snow heavily, so we gave it up and returned.

Shortly after this Carr went home, and on August 12 Wicks and I determined to try again. We took a porter up to C.P., and, leaving him there, quickly went on to the gap. After some time I managed to get to the piton and threw the doubled rope over the buttress, where it hung as in our former attempt. Wicks then went down to the bottom of the Dunod chimney and held it tight. By its aid I passed up from the piton on to a shoulder in the buttress, and found a nice flat place about a foot wide and four or five feet long. After several tries I managed to throw the rope over the brown bulge at the top of the Dunod chimney and it reached down to just where it was wanted. It was tiring work fixing this rope and we were only two. Wicks being fresher had first shot, but could not pass the overhang ; being taller I managed to do so, but unfortunately in my struggles I jerked one of the ropes off the bulge ; it flew 20 ft. to the right, and as I was holding both ropes I was gradually pulled out of the direct route. I had to give it up, slid down the rope, and we returned to our porter. Two is not enough for a guideless party by this route.

On August 14, 1891, Wicks, J. H. Gibson and I tried again. It was a very cold and windy day, and we were nearly four hours getting the rope fixed. Neither Wicks nor Gibson managed to pass the overhang, and as it was then past 4 p.m. we thought it prudent to return.

On August 5, 1892, Dr. C. Wilson, C. H. Pasteur and François Simond, who had led the two successful ascents from this side, made the next attempt. They spent three hours

at the gap, but could not get to the piton, so had to give it up and returned. The failure of François on this occasion makes me wonder whether Wicks's surmise about a ladder being there in 1889 is correct or not, or was François anxious not to unfold his secret?

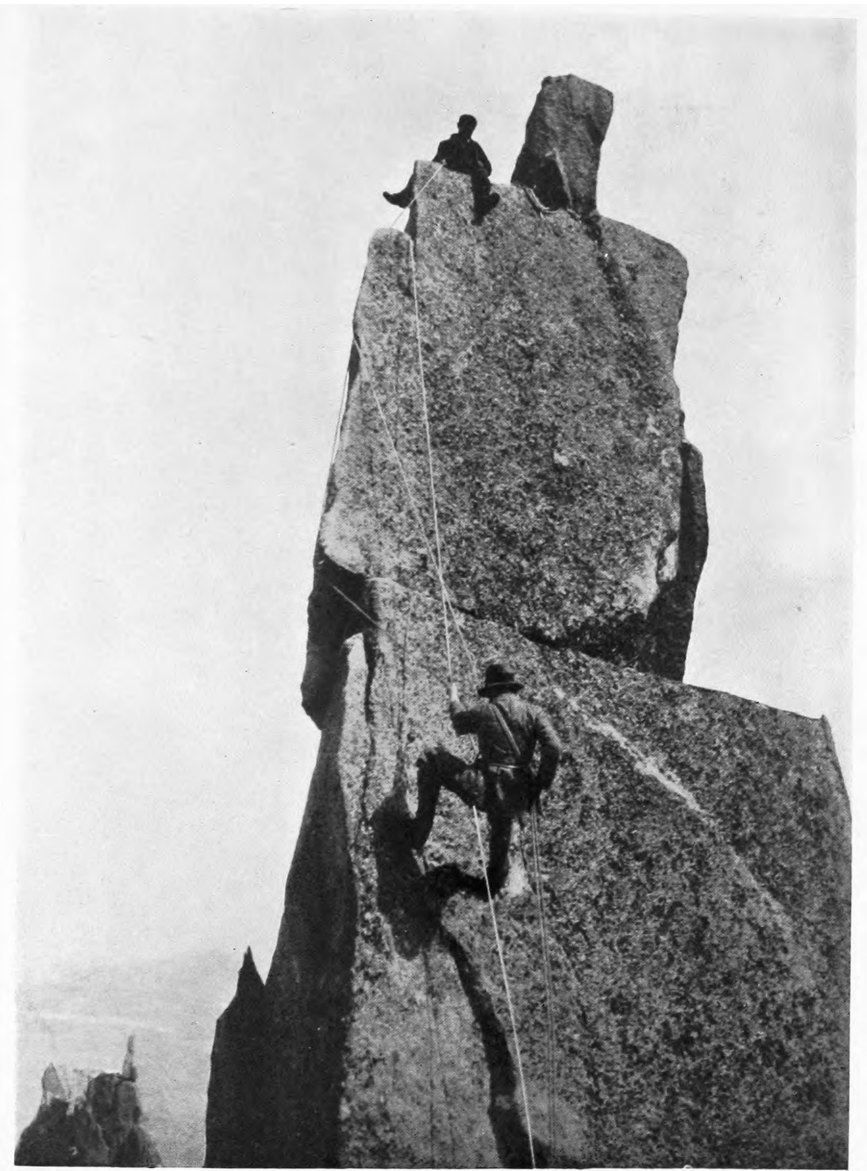
Three days later, on August 8, Wicks having been suddenly recalled to England, Gibson, Pasteur, Wilson and I set off again. We left the hotel at 2.45 A.M. and reached the gap at 8.15. Here we fed, and knowing the tricks of the trade by now, the rope was fixed by 10. We all went to the bottom of the chimney and, one of us putting his whole weight on the rope, to prevent any more jerking off the bulge, pushed Gibson up over the overhang. The fourth ascent of the Grépon, guideless, was made by 11.15. After half an hour's rest, we let⁴ Wilson down on the Mer de Glace face to the wide ledge next to the gap, to see if any route could be spotted on that (E.) side but he reported that it seemed impossible. Wilson sent up his axe, which we left, with a handkerchief attached, on the summit. We returned to the gap, collected our ropes and sacks, and reached Montenvers at 5.30 P.M. The axe did not remain there long, for on August 18 Mummery, Collie, Hastings and Pasteur went up from the Charmoz-Grépon Col and retrieved the ice-axe (*Mummery*, p. 140) and descended via C.P., making the first traverse from N. to S.

This axe has a curious after-story attached to it. Wilson had returned to England before it was retrieved, and Pasteur took it back a week later. The up boat-train stopped for a minute on Charing Cross Bridge, and at the same time a down train, with Wilson in it, stopped also. Their two carriages were opposite to each other. Both happened to look up, so Pasteur passed the axe across, and Wilson took it home.

On August 4, 1893, Mummery, Hastings and Miss Bristow repeated the N. to S. traverse. Three others of their party went by the C.P. route, and Mummery let a rope down the Dunod chimney by which they ascended. First ascent and traverse by a lady.

Then, on August 6, Captain Farrar with Daniel Maquignaz and Christian Klucker followed the Mummery route. The latter's chimney was still rather unknown, and they missed it as I did in 1889. However, they spotted the wooden wedges, and had the same exciting experience as I had in making the

⁴ *i.e.* by the chimney now called after the guide Josef Knubel.



Bâton Wicks.

THE 'BIG DROP' OR GRAND GENDARME

second ascent of the slabs.⁵ They traversed the mountain, and discovered that one could get to C.P. by keeping to the left and passing over a stone bridge. This stone bridge, or arch, was mentioned by the brothers Balfour as affording a possible route from C.P. ('A.J.' **10**, 398). This route then became the usual way, as it obviated leaving the short rope necessary to re-ascend to C.P.

Two days later, August 8, Wicks, Wilson and I ascended from the C.P. side, hoping to find a rope hanging at the big drop. We left the Montenvers at 1.35 A.M. and were on the top at 10.10. We presently moved on and reached the foot of the big drop by 11.30. Unfortunately the rope which Mummery had left on the 4th had blown over to the Nantillons side and was jammed, so it was of much less use than we had hoped for, still it helped in the first part of the climb, which is the most difficult. We struggled up and were all on the N. peak by 12.20. We left at 1 P.M., and going down the Mummery chimney reached Montenvers at 8.15, thus making the first traverse from S. to N.

Early in September of the same year, Pasteur, H. A. Beeching, and P. A. L. Pryor, Miss Pasteur and Miss M. Pasteur with Alfred Simond tried from the C.P. side again. Pasteur writes to me that he 'showed Simond how to fix the rope, which he eventually succeeded in doing, but none of us managed to get up after the rope was fixed.'

Further, on Sept. 6, 1893 (Captain Farrar writes to me), the late Mr. Gerald Arbuthnot with Jean and Antoine Maître also missed the Mummery chimney and ascended by the slabs (Antoine leading); they were benighted after completing the ascent.

My early history of the Grépon is finished, having carried it to the same date as the Charmoz. There may have been other attempts or ascents of which I have not heard; still, I think I may add that on July 5, 1894, Miss M. Pasteur, T. L. Kesteven and I with Alfred Simond (who was most anxious to ascend the Grépon) started again by the C.P. route. I made Simond fix the rope, Kesteven led up the chimney, and we were on the top by 10; the first ascent by a lady from the C.P. side. We went along to the big drop and found the hanging rope gone, so returned by C.P.

Two days later, July 7, Simond satisfied his ambitions with

⁵ Now deservedly known as *les plaques Morse* (Vallot, I, pp. 58-9).
—Editor.

Kesteven and myself by leading up the Mummery chimney, and we traversed the mountain, returning to Montenvers in twelve hours.

The later history of this fascinating peak with variations of the two routes above described, and especially the ascent in 1911 from the Mer de Glace side by Mr. Winthrop Young's party, are all noted in the *ALPINE JOURNAL* and the Vallot Guide, so there is no necessity for me to recite them.

How are the mighty fallen! There is a constant stream *via* the Mummery chimney over the Grépon nowadays, but I believe that few, if any, of the *voyageurs* declare that the expedition has failed to fulfil their expectations, and the Grépon of old is *THE* Grépon to-day.

[On July 31, 1922, Sir George Morse made his sixth ascent of the Aiguille de Grépon, accompanied by his daughter.—*Editor.*]

ILLUSIONS.

By GEOFFREY E. HOWARD.

(Read before the Alpine Club, May 3, 1927.)

WHEN our Honorary Secretary commanded me to write a paper on what he was pleased to call an abstract subject, my first mental comment was that it was a pure illusion on his part to imagine that the Club likes, or even tolerates, papers without slides. Indeed I have a ghastly remembrance that when once before I essayed something of the kind in this room, while seated nervously during the Presidential preliminaries, my natural agitation was hardly allayed by overhearing several eminent Members expressing the opinion that papers without slides were a great mistake and calculated to produce the nadir of boredom.

But anyhow, the idea of Illusions in general wove into my mind a somewhat disorderly train of thought on the subject of the remarkable number and variety of illusions connected since the dawn of time with mountains and mountaineering. Undoubtedly there is something about mountains which

stimulates the latent love or fear of the mysterious in every human mind.

History, from the earliest times, teems with mountain illusions, many of which survive to-day among primitive peoples. Even highly cultured races like the ancient Greeks peopled their mountains with gods and nymphs. The Tibetans make the summit of Everest the seat of a hairy demon monster. The Children of Israel obviously had an illusion that it was especially in mountains that holy men could most easily commune with Jehovah. Instances could be multiplied almost *ad libitum* and might well form the subject of a separate paper by an ethnologist.

The Swiss peasant, familiar though he was with his mountains, peopled them with monsters: and so strong was the illusion that even within the last few centuries he was so far convinced of an occasional encounter with a real live dragon, that he would descend with sufficiently circumstantial descriptions of the pterodactyl to enable local artists to engrave lively portraits thereof. Are they not written and portrayed in the Book of Scheuchzer?

And though to an enlightened audience like ours, this seems to be the height of absurdity, can we wonder when men like Lord Rothermere or Lord Beaverbrook, heirs to all the knowledge of the ages, show day by day in their newspapers that any event which is not of daily occurrence in their own immediate environment 'astonishes, astounds and amazes' them—I use their own favourite expressions; that any person or matter which happens to be unknown to them is a Mystery, and any form of social intercourse involving either dialogue or action is a Drama? The Press being excluded this evening, they would probably describe this Meeting as 'Mountain Mens Mystery Meeting: Amazing Drama.' When, I say, matters in the slightest degree unusual impress themselves thus on the naïve and timid minds of men with all the educational advantages of the modern Press writer—can one wonder that in the Boeotian intelligence of the mediæval Swiss peasant or of the remote dwellers in mountain regions in more primitive places to-day, the grandeur and aloofness of the mountains inspired and inspire illusions productive of terror, awe or worship?

Perhaps, at first sight, especially to uninstructed minds, the mountains do give an illusion of aloofness and repulsion, and it may be that they themselves faintly marvel at our passionate embraces, as the maiden who has hitherto considered herself

a singularly unkissable entity marvels at the caresses of a lover. The outside world gazes in faint astonishment at the ecstasies conjured up in a friend by the unevident charms of his mistress. They know nothing of her spell, of the delicious secret places of her heart and soul. These are reserved for the chosen one. And so the mountains, awe-inspiring and even definitely repulsive to the uninitiated, reserve their darling joys for votaries, who, undismayed by the illusion of a frown, woo their mistress with devotion of body, soul and spirit. The black chasm hides a jewelled nook of moss and flowers ; the unclimbable precipice, a perfectly delightful chimney ; the impassable bergschrund, the most cunningly contrived snow-bridge ; the seemingly endless snow grind, the fierce joy of refreshment at the end.

Of the secret pleasures of the mind it is harder to speak. These, perhaps, *are* illusions, but if so they are of the texture which gives us glimpses of the divine. Some are faintly startling, but more are blessed, if momentary, releases from the hard facts of material existence. We have all experienced that strange and stimulating illusion on the summit of a high peak whence nothing meets the eye but snow, ice and rock, that we are in a new world, almost a new planet, cut off from the hurly-burly of the old life. And have we not sometimes, at such moments, stranger, more inexpressible illusions ? Was the ancient belief regarding the proximity of gods and spirits on mountain tops wholly a delusion ? Can we not at least give so much latitude to the feelings of awe which sometimes come to us in the vast loneliness of mountain summits, as to allow us to believe that transcendental minds such as Moses or Elijah possessed could actually commune with the Great Unseen in places where even we, with all our limitations, feel a strange sensation that the mysterious veil which the eye of human reason cannot penetrate is perchance a little thinner than elsewhere ?

Even lower down, lying among flowers of delicious beauty, beside some splashing stream, in the shade of pine or rock, do we not sometimes lose ourselves in a heavenly illusion within an illusion—that those haunts of the plains, familiar, but sordid, garish or hectic as the case may be, have no real existence ; that Fenchurch Street Station, the moving staircase at Oxford Circus, Wall Street, the Moulin Rouge, the Hull Docks, are in fact merely the fantastic imaginings of an H. G. Wells or a De Quincey, born in a lunatic asylum—that life in its exquisite reality is here ? The mountains framed in drifting clouds against the blue sky, the age-old pine slowly growing

to maturity through the years and slowly decaying, the annual renewal of the flowers, the ever-flowing stream, seem at such moments to be the only eternal realities. Men toil and sweat, excite themselves over ephemeral trivialities, collect their little bank-notes, talk endlessly about nothing, and read each other papers to show how clever they think they are. All illusion! The stream splashes eternally down in gentle mockery.

That is why mountains provide the greatest of all recreations, in the literal sense of the word. We return from them not only strengthened in body, but with our minds and souls laved in a beneficent stream of that refreshment which comes from throwing off the illusions which torment and weary, and bathing in those which delight and purify. While this does not vindicate or even excuse the adorable but dangerous practice of solitary climbing, it is certainly one of the causes which adds to the pleasure of being alone. Even the most perfect companions will sometimes choose the psychological moment at which one's mind is caught up on the wings of breathless beauty to indulge in an outburst of awful heartiness. Nor do I for a moment doubt that everyone of us is at times equally guilty. In solitude we can suit our programme to our mood. Sometimes it is sheer delight, suddenly and from shameful reasons of laziness, to abandon the pleasure of conquest in exchange for a bathe or a contemplative pipe. It is unlikely that a party of climbers can ever be simultaneously seized with the same impulse, and, if that impulse is for inaction, that they should all have the moral courage to admit it. How often, on a summit, some of us would choose to spend an hour in silent happiness, but the eagerness of a companion to 'bag another top' is too obviously laudable to be resisted. Indeed in mountaineering it is hard to say whether Mary or Martha finds the other the more irritating. But Martha holds all the cards; she shakes *Ball's Guide* in her sister's face, and poor Mary must abandon her dreams and illusions and get to work again.

Coming perhaps nearer home, I cannot avoid mentioning that touching illusion which steals over all mountaineers as they approach middle age and persists and increases till at last it melts into reality. I allude to the dreadful and persistent illusion that young climbers take the remotest interest in our early performances. Many a strong youth wilts at the words 'I recollect in '89.' There are, of course, notable exceptions. Historic feats of daring, adventure and endurance are eagerly

listened to and always will be ; but the heroes of such are generally the last men to breathe a word on the subject. I refer to the ordinary climber who happened to ascend the Matterhorn a number of years ago. The state of the snow, the personality of the guides, the condition of the hut, while of vivid interest to the man who did the climb in the '80's or '90's, fills the youthful listener with a feeling akin to the depression of the audience of the lady who informs her nieces that in her young days gentlewomen never showed their ankles !

There is another exception. As time goes on, survivors of remote periods become links with the past, fascinating historical survivals. To-day survivors of the great pioneering '60's need be under no illusion. Their remembrances of those days are eagerly sought for and treasured by anyone with imagination and historical sense. And the '70's : what of them ? I think the '70's are hovering in that hush of twilight which precedes the dawn. Happy, hopeful '70's ! Your time is coming. Soon through the dark clouds of illusion will break the glorious sense of reality. Soon, respectful youth will hang upon your lips and treasure your recollections. '80's and '90's, you are still wrapped in your mists of illusion. Be strong to bear it ; and you, young men, be stronger to bear it too ! Yours, O youth, is the greater burden, and for your infinite patience and courtesy, we of the '90's, and even '80's, tender you our gratitude.

It goes without saying, however, that it is the young who live in a complete world of illusion as regards mountaineering. I have far too great a respect for youth to do more than sketch a few of the most prevalent delusions under which they labour. One, of course, is that all guides are super-climbers. How rude is often the awaking ! I remember one instance in my own early wanderings. (There, you see, the ' I recollect in '97 ' complex is irresistible !) In Granada a kindly Spanish gentleman recommended me a guide for the Sierra Nevada ; honest, attentive, and a marvellous climber. Of the first two attributes, I will say little. Of the third I will only remark that the first time we found ourselves on a ledge—it was under the summit of the Veleta and quite 4 ft. wide—he turned to me with ashen face and shaking limbs with the naïve remark ' I do not love the mountains ; I prefer city life.' After that I preferred to lead.

Continental youth apparently believes that a *Gratwanderung* is mountaineering. Steeplechasing over the greatest possible number of peaks in 24 hours may be an exacting form of

'physical jerks,' but its connection with true mountaineering is about as close as the Lama's prayer-wheel is to the pure teachings of Gautama. Another illusion of youth seems to be that to select the inaccessible cliff face of a mountain, and, burdened with vast stores of ringed pitons, which are, over a period of days, laboriously driven into the rock, to link them by a threaded rope till the summit is reached, bears some relation to climbing. This morganatic union of Vulcan and Penelope may exercise the muscles, but its votaries can obviously only class themselves as amateur steeplejacks, and by the same token not nearly such useful members of the community as those intrepid gymnasts.

In passing, I must remark that there are men and women who have told me that the first hour from the hut gives them an illusion of hell. Stumbling by lantern light up the moraine, face, hands and feet freezing, while the body perspires miserably—half asleep—the digestive organs in perplexed confusion plaintively wailing to their sympathetic and unhappy owners in involuntary borborygmie ejaculations. I cannot agree with these friends. For my part I can find no illusion about this: it is hell!

And lastly there is the passing of a 70-year-old illusion among the public, that mountaineers were strange eccentrics who risked life and limb in the pursuit of nothing! Sane men would climb, gun in hand, to kill living creatures, or would wander in mountain regions to find gold—but for nothing? A foolish form of meaningless endeavour. To-day the illusion is passing—passing owing to two widely different causes. First, the profound impression made on the public mind by the epic of Everest, which at last stirred their imaginations to realize that there is something in high endeavour among mountains even where there is no material reward; and, secondly,—I believe I am right—the enormous popularity of winter sports.

It was the English, with their infinite capacity for the incongruous, who set the example of creating one of the most absurd but productive illusions in the Alps. Realizing the timid and unimaginative temperaments of our great middle-classes whose vision is bounded alternatively by their native suburb and Gleneagles, Bournemouth or Sheringham with an occasional wild and dangerous dash to Dinard, some ingenious persons conceived the idea of luring young men and maidens to the alarming pinnacles of the centre of Europe by creating an almost perfect illusion of home-life in the winter hotels.

Nervous and diffident, these young persons begin to set forth on the novel experiment in little coveys, to discover to their delight that the hotel, the band, and the company are an exact reproduction of their own Wimbledon, Edgbaston, West Didsbury, and all the rest of the dwelling-places of the more solid portions of Britain's vertebræ, with an American bar thrown in. Free from the painful necessity of speaking a foreign tongue or mingling with foreigners, they begin to venture outside into the snow. They come to jazz, they stay to ski, and in many cases, gripped by that strange and exquisite spell which the mountains know how to weave round the hearts of their votaries, return again and again, winter and summer; and in a constantly increasing band of enthusiasts, constitute one of the most fertile recruiting grounds for mountaineers. For do not let us foster another illusion, namely, that ski-ing and mountaineering have little or no connection. On the contrary there is often a true love match between them, and there are few who really mountaineer on ski who are not equally enthusiastic summer climbers. That again is the inevitable spell of the mountains.

Indeed I believe that few Alpine travellers, even among those firmly seated in a funicular, with no concrete vision in their minds beyond a bottle of beer at the top thereof, have not somewhere in a remote corner of their souls an unuttered wish to be up among the snows and glaciers. They will deny it hotly if you suggest it, but it is there all the same, and therefore even funiculars are not wholly to be despised, for in their iron womb is often conceived a passionate longing which is brought forth, nurtured and finally developed into a perfectly matured and completely bald A.C.

But if the public are beginning to take a more intelligent view of mountaineering, do not let us lay the flattering unction to our souls that they are even remotely interested in the small individual achievements of a Whitsun holiday. Here is illusion *in excelsis*! Unless these achievements are unhappily varied by 'The broken leg, the frequent fall,' the newspaper reader turns drearily on to the more earth-shaking topics of Mary Pickford's toilet and Dean Inge's considered views on the Decay of Communism. The precise manner in which Jones disported himself on Bank Holiday, even though he made the 593rd ascent of Smith's Chimney, on the N.N.W. Buttress of Tryfan, leaves John Bull unmoved. Such efforts to secure a niche in the Temple of Fame are perhaps due to forgetfulness that it is, after all, only a temple and not a skyscraper.



Phot. H. E. Porter.

THE S. RIDGE OF MT. TASMAN
from the Silberhorn
at 7 a.m.

If there is a universal tragedy of life, it is, I think, that we spend the first half of it in crushing our passions, our ideals, all these delicately illusive emotions, longings and ambitions which are the halo of youth—and we spend the second half trying to recapture them. We are schooled and drilled to believe all such things to be illusions. We diligently pack them away and allow ourselves to be turned into tidy little machines which catch the morning train, perform clerical and similar income-producing functions, make suitable marriages, and compel our offspring to perform the same cramping evolutions. In middle life we shake ourselves—were they all illusions? We are more than doubtful; but, gripped in the vast machinery of convention, we carry on the conventional routine. We turn, however, more and more eagerly to the mountains. There, in solitude, we can nurse our souls back to youth and to the realization of its joys. And I think that to the old, mountains must be the perfect recompense, for even to a very advanced age they can be enjoyed. You take longer to get into training, you can only climb one or two in a season, but once again your body glows with vigour, and you rest on the summit bathed again in the illusion of youth. Turning your eyes inwards you distinguish with undimmed clarity of vision, lighted by experience, between illusion and truth. The trappings of convention fall from your mind; you sort the gold from the dross, and seem to hover in spirit between the real and the Delectable Mountains. An illusion of age perhaps: or perhaps the very essence of Truth. Who can tell?

MOUNT TASMAN AND ITS SATELLITES.

By H. E. L. PORTER.

(Read before the Alpine Club, November 1, 1927.)

MY first two visits to New Zealand, satisfying as they were, left a large number of objects of desire unattained, by far the most absorbing of which was the queenly Mt. Tasman (11,475 ft.), the highest peak on the main divide of the Southern Alps. Of all the mountains that I have ever seen in reality or even in dreams, Tasman is the most faultlessly beautiful, with the one possible exception of the Weisshorn. Though it has not the latter's pyramidal regularity, it yet displays a curiously

uniform appearance from almost every point of view, a feature which I hope to demonstrate to you to-night : for not only did we achieve our main ambition of getting up Tasman somehow, but, to our great satisfaction, we succeeded in making the first traverse of the mountain, and further stood on all but one of its immediate neighbours, securing fine photographs of it from east and west, north and south, far and near, above and below. From each direction it stands out in unique majesty, draped in a bridal robe of shimmering white, through which the rocky framework peeps out here and there to reassure one that the vision is not merely a creation of fantasy.

The structure of the mountain is simple. There are three pronounced ridges, south, north and west. The S. ridge, after a drop of 800 ft. from the summit, rises 100 ft. to the Silberhorn (10,757 ft.), continuing thence at a high level to Teichelmann and Dampier : from the Silberhorn another ridge falls steeply eastwards to the Grand Plateau, bounding the lower reaches of the Linda glacier. The N. ridge has a conspicuous shoulder 350 ft. below the top, from which it descends gradually to a nameless col 1000 ft. lower. During the season we descended this col on both sides, and, as practicable passes in the heart of the chain should have a name, we have suggested ' Engineer Pass ' as a suitable title, and by this name, for convenience, I shall refer to it in my paper. To the north of Engineer Pass, the divide runs over Lendenfeld and Haast before dropping to Pioneer Pass, one of the three passes so far made between the Hermitage and Waiho. The E. flank of Tasman is a face of contorted ice with but one prominent feature, a rib running up to the N. shoulder, up which a route may conceivably be made some day. The third great ridge runs westward toward the coast for many miles, dividing the basin of the Fox glacier from that of the Balfour, and has some fine peaks on it, notably Torres, Le Receveur and Big Mac. This ridge remains to be climbed, and is by far the most difficult of access of the few remaining great untrodden ridges of the Southern Alps.

The history of Tasman, as far as human feet are concerned, is still very brief. It started on February 6, 1895, when Major E. A. FitzGerald with Zurbriggen and Clarke, then a young porter, ascended it via the Silberhorn after one abortive attempt ('A. J.' 18, 69). They were wearing crampons, except for Clarke, who only had inefficient spikes. This is FitzGerald's summary of the day : ' The time occupied by the ascent and descent was 16 hours. The work of the day had been very fatiguing, as we had been nearly the whole time step-

cutting. Zurbriggen said that he had never known such toilsome snow or ice in Switzerland, or any ascent like this one for almost 6000 ft. on an ice-arête.' Six thousand, I may say at once, is an exaggeration. The point at which the ice-arête is struck is about 8850 ft. : deduct this from the total of 11,475 ft., and the arête dwindles to a mere 2600 ft. After an interval of seventeen years, Peter and Alec Graham conducted the all-conquering Miss Du Faur to the summit on March 24, 1912 : success came to them at the third attempt. It was a cold, windy day ; the final arête was out of the question, and they went out on the E. face to avoid the westerly gale, forcing a way up to the ridge at a point close to the summit. The third ascent was achieved on February 15, 1913, by Mr. Turner, guided by Peter Graham and Darby Thomson. The first two parties took 16 hours each, and the third 19 hours. All three followed the same route, crossing the Grand Plateau and striking the E. ridge of the Silberhorn half-way up, and then adhering to the ridge as closely as circumstances permitted.

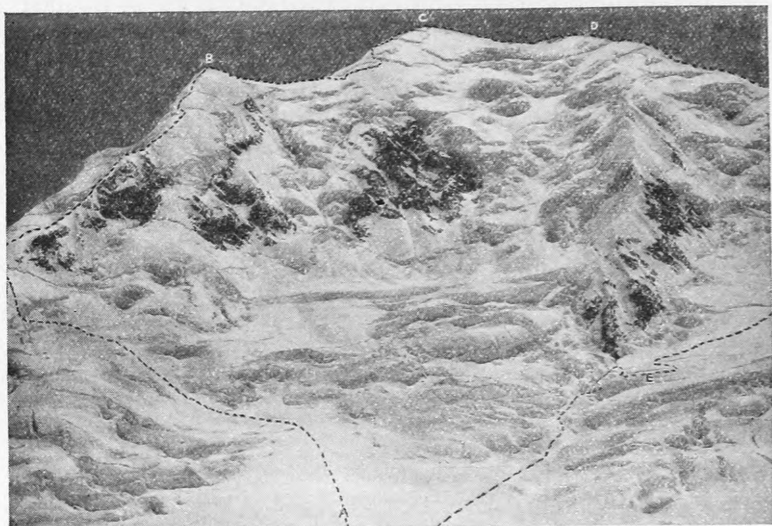
In my previous seasons I had travelled out alone. This year I was fortunate enough to lure Marcel Kurz away from his favourite winter pursuit with the bait of a new mountain range, whereon to feast his cartographic eye. Tasman being our main objective, we went to the Hermitage on December 8, hoping for plentiful snow and small schrunds so early in the season. The weather, however, was atrocious. After one completely wasted journey up the Tasman glacier, we got to the Haast hut on December 18, a beautiful day, only to see the fatal cloud, no bigger than a man's hand, appear in Lendenfeld Saddle within an hour of our arrival. This cloud almost invariably portends a raging nor'wester within 24 hours, and the present occasion was no exception to the rule. We made a desperate bid to scale the Silberhorn next day, before the storm broke, but prudence forced us to retire at 5 A.M. at about 10,000 ft. in the face of furious gusts of powdery snow. The ridge, to my surprise, was in bad order, the ice being overlaid with unattached snow : despite our crampons many steps had to be cut, and we were making slow progress when we retired. In the 17 days before Christmas we only achieved two minor peaks, Sealy and the Footstool. I might aptly compare our efforts during this period to a Shakespearian battle ; scene after scene of marching and counter-marching, but remarkably little bloodshed or execution as a result of all the activity. But the knowledge we gained of each other's methods and ideas laid the foundation of our successes in the following weeks, and

incidentally Kurz had a chance one day on the Mueller glacier of showing me how an expert skis.

After Christmas festivities at the home of my future wife, which did not improve our training, we returned with a firm resolve to change our tactics. Before Christmas we had fled from the storm back to the comfort of the Hermitage. We decided now to dig ourselves in, when we got to a hut, and lay regular siege to the peaks of our desire. Pursuant of this resolution, we arrived on January 6 in dubious weather at the Haast hut, and at once the weather-demon, realising that we were not in a mood to be trifled with, placated us with a perfect day on the 7th, a day such as only occurs twice or thrice in a New Zealand season. At 1 A.M. stars were shining through a light mist. We were away at 1.50, and with somewhat creaking joints crawled up Glacier Dome in snow so soft that the crampons on our backs seemed a mere mockery. On the Grand Plateau, however, they were put in their proper place, and worn for the next twelve hours without touching a rock. Following the line we had selected on a reconnaissance the previous afternoon, we steered through the breaks and crevasses of the E. face, till we struck the E. ridge of the Silberhorn at 4.30. An hour later we reached our highest point of December 19, finding the condition of the ridge so much improved that so far we had hardly to cut a step. This was most inspiring, and our knees began to resume their proper elasticity. The schrund near the top of the Silberhorn, which in some years assumes gigantic proportions (two years ago Milne and I had examined it from a distance through glasses, and thought it impassable), fell easily at the first assault. At 6.35 we emerged with delightful suddenness on the delicate cone of the Silberhorn, and halted till 7.10 for a meal and photography. Seen from here, the 800 ft. of knife-edged ice, the straight and narrow road high-perched in space, that leads to Tasman, is a vision to make the heart of a mountaineer thrill and throb with anticipation of battle. It looks appallingly steep, narrow and acute, more so than it is in reality owing to foreshortening, though the reality is grim enough. Miss Du Faur has a graphic account of her impressions of the same scene. 'Naturally,' she says, 'our first thought was for the Tasman arête. With one accord our glances swept it searchingly. The silence that followed was ominous. I felt cold shivers running up and down my spine, as I viewed the last thousand feet of our proposed climb from close quarters. From the Tasman glacier the ridge seems to rise out of the Silberhorn in a gentle, softly-inviting slope. From our

newly-gained summit it rears a knife-like edge for 1000 ft. at the most appalling angle I had ever beheld or imagined.'

There is a descent of just over 100 ft. to the col between the two peaks. Half-way down it we stumbled on a huge unsuspected schrund. We stamped warily down its steep upper lip, and jumped an 8 ft. gap on to a sloping floor of iron-hard snow, the jar whereof unfortunately did some damage to a tendon in Kurz's right knee. Looking up we found to our



Photo, H. E. Porter.]

THE EAST FACE OF MT. TASMAN FROM GLACIER DOME.

(Dotted line shows up and down routes.)

B=Silberhorn.

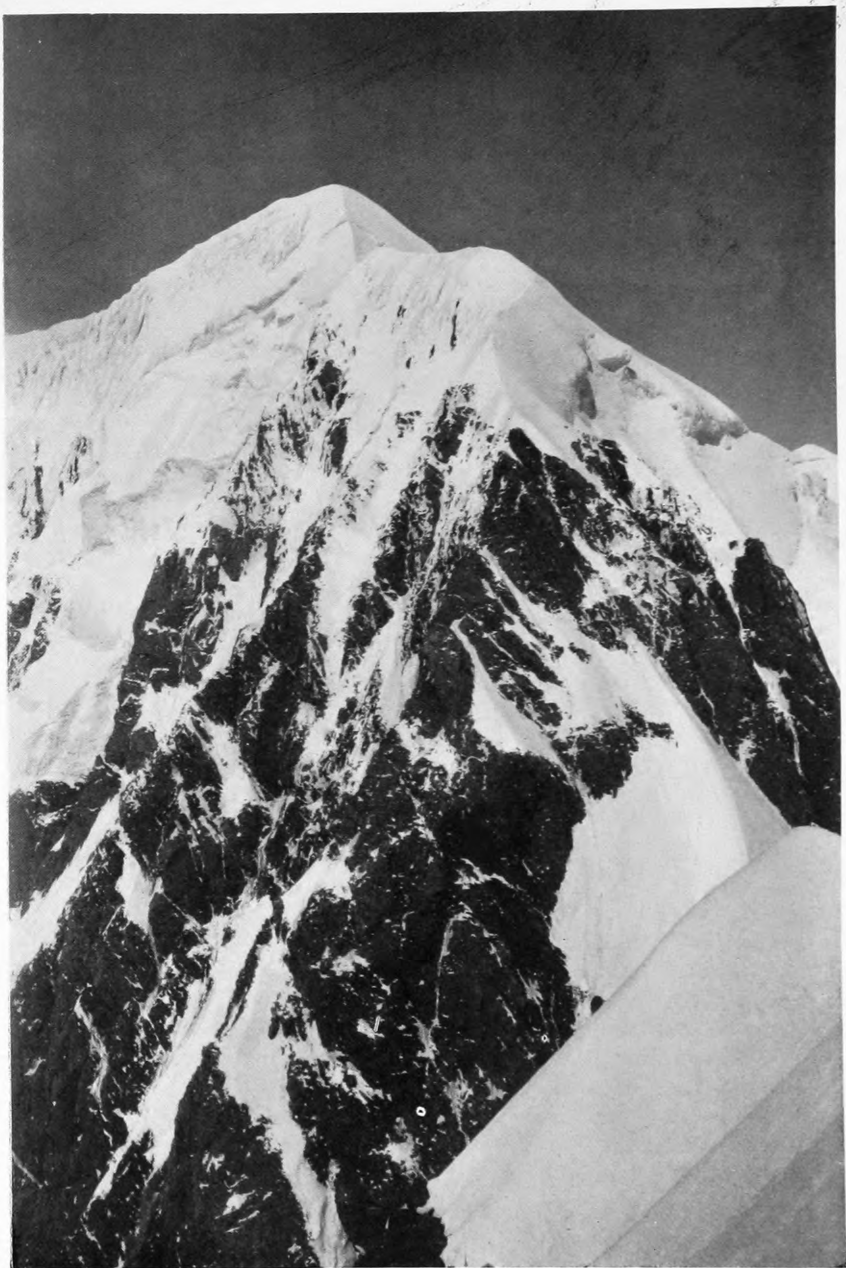
C=Tasman.

D='Shoulder.'

surprise that the last 10 ft. of the upper lip were nothing but a thin overarching gable of congealed stalactites of ice: inside was a wondrous icicle-fringed grotto, wherein our bodies threw shadows of deepest ultramarine in the dim light. A short way up the final ridge, we shirked an attack on an overhanging schrund, and skirted along its lower lip on the E. face for quite 200 yards, before a chance of success presented itself. Here the obstacle ran up into a bay, to the apex of which we mounted. To our left the schrund forked, the upper prong narrowing rapidly to a thin crack. The day was won if we could attain the floor of the upper fork, which was choked with snow.

Direct ascent to it was impossible owing to the unbridged chasm of the lower prong, but we could cross the main schrund on débris straight in front of us. The almost sheer wall opposite was blotched with some frail snow-pimples, which formed a precarious and irregular ladder, whose stability seemed to me insufficient to withstand our weight. I was leading at the time, but felt doubtful whether my icemanship was delicate enough for the job. Kurz, who was more hopeful, stepped gallantly into the breach, and with brilliant skill mastered the problem. By deft foot-pressure each pimple was so trodden down as to give the maximum support, but the rungs were so awkwardly spaced, that I for one found it extremely difficult to raise my weight from one to the other without a dangerous thrust from the hind foot, the ice being too hard to allow of a driven pick to help the leverage. None of the essential steps on this 15 ft. ladder collapsed under us, and at the top of it a more substantial traverse landed us on the sloping floor between the prongs, whence, breaking through a screen of icicles, we emerged on the face, walked round the end of the crack and cut our way back to the ridge about 80 ft. above at its steepest and acutest point. The edge here was too adventurous even for my new 'Eckenstein' crampons without steps, but we found below the slight cornice on the E. flank a convenient groove where hard snow gave good footing, till the angle eased off. On the last lap, wildly elated at certain victory, we did a vigorous spurt, the right foot treading squarely on the edge and the left driven firmly into the steep ice of the W. face. The proud moment of attained ambition arrived at 8.50, exactly 7 hours after the start, 7 hours as intense with hopes and fears as I have ever spent on a mountain, for I confess without reserve that the conquest of Tasman had been an overmastering obsession of mine, ever since I first set eyes on its glorious majesty.

Our preliminary reconnaissance from Glacier Dome had satisfied us that, granted perfect conditions, there was nothing to prevent us from descending the virgin N. ridge, and, at its foot, either dropping direct from Engineer Pass, or else traversing Lendenfeld and descending from the next col which has twice been reached from the Grand Plateau by parties led by Peter Graham, and looks less steep and less dominated by hanging ice than the first alternative. In point of fact there was no symptom of undue danger in either of these broad open couloirs at this time of year, though when we traversed Haast and Lendenfeld a month later the sights and



Phot. M. Kurz.

MT. TASMAN FROM MT. TORRES.

Showing the unclimbed West Ridge, and on the left the top of the North Ridge.



Phot. M. Kurz.

MT. TASMAN FROM LENDENFELD.
Showing the North Ridge and Shoulder.

sounds visible and audible in the channel to which we committed ourselves on this occasion were enough to freeze the marrow in the bones of two cautious mountaineers with a strong dislike of perilous situations and a vivid memory of Captain Farrar's last words of advice to us before we left England: 'Achtung, immer Achtung!'

The N. ridge now lay before us in all its enticing length. The conditions could hardly have been better, the weather was certain and the day still young. After 15 minutes on top, spent chiefly in studying the magnificent N. face of Mt. Cook, we started down it, moving one at a time, but without finding it necessary to cut steps, the ridge being gentler in angle and less acute of edge than its sister on the S. The W. face in the upper part presented an Alpine phenomenon which neither of us had seen elsewhere. It was draped with row upon row of gigantic leaning columns of porous ice, perforated by deeply-cut funnels of almost circular section. The cause of them is obscure, but they are a permanent feature here, being visible in the earliest photographs. It is curious that the W. face of Mt. Cook too has a peculiar ice-formation, to which I shall refer later, also permanent and also unique in our experience, but quite different from that on Tasman. The E. side, as usual, was heavily corniced, and we had to proceed warily between the scallops of the W. and the oubliettes of the E. At 9.50 we paused for a meal on the N. shoulder, after which our cameras recorded faithfully a scene of Alpine beauty, which for me is unforgettable. Below us lay the immense névé of the Fox, and beyond it the west-coast bush and the illimitable ocean: to N. and W. a vista of ice-clad peaks, many of them all the more lovely in my eyes for having permitted my feet to wander up and down them: behind us the ridge which has been the subject of many day-dreams in the past years. The remainder of the ridge calls for no special comment, and we reached Engineer Pass without incident at 11.30. This col had thrice been attained from the W. by Canon H. E. Newton and Alec Graham between 1904 and 1907: they had been rightly confident that the N. ridge provided an easier route to the summit than the S., and only very bad luck in their weather robbed them of the first ascent.

Kurz's damaged knee was now becoming very swollen and painful, and no amount of auto-suggestion could deceive me into believing myself at my best. Accordingly we relinquished the traverse of Lendenfeld, and set about the direct descent of the 3000 ft. concavity leading to the Grand Plateau. Below the col

was a vast schrund, too deep to jump. Kurz had thoughtfully cut and carried some wooden stakes about 30 in. long in case of such an emergency, and round one of these well-planted in the upper lip we doubled the rope and slung ourselves down. The steep snow face was interminably long, as hot as an inferno, and not too secure. The snow was balling badly under our crampons, and the tapping of ice-axes against boots to loosen the balls became monotonous. The next $2\frac{1}{2}$ hours were not, strictly speaking, enjoyable in such a windless furnace. Near the plateau the fairway contracts to a gut, bounded on the N. by the cliffs of Haast and on the S. by the séracs of the E. face of Tasman. The gut itself is seamed with gigantic crevasses, from the clutches of which we escaped only by the narrowest possible margin, to slide thankfully down the last 300 ft. to the plateau by an easy groove. The plateau has a slight southward tilt, and seldom appears to soften into a morass: in virtue of which the 500 ft. of ascent to Glacier Dome, though tiresome, were not so exhausting as they might have been. At 3.20, $13\frac{1}{2}$ hours after our start, we regained the hut, and were welcomed by Mahan, a Dunedin student who was acting as our cook and porter, with a delighted grin and handshake.

Three days later we made the second ascent of the S. peak of Haidinger, the higher of its two summits (10,178 ft.) The party had been augmented on the 9th by the arrival of Mr. Clive and Miss Doris Barker, who toiled up the Haast ridge under a grilling sun with a large supply of extra food, including four 4 lb. loaves of bread, a commodity of which we still had plenty. If only it had been tinned fruit, they would have been even more welcome than they were. We followed FitzGerald's route almost exactly ('A.J.' 18, 73), except that after traversing from the Haast ridge on to the upper névé of the Haast glacier we went straight up to Pioneer Pass, which the former party appear to have short-circuited. Three years ago Milne and I found the pass defended by a most repellent schrund. This year we walked across it without any trouble. The long ridge from the pass to Haidinger was as entrancing as I had imagined it to be, when I regretfully turned back from it in 1924. The ascent took $7\frac{1}{2}$ hours as compared with FitzGerald's $8\frac{1}{4}$. On the top we found the bottle deposited by his party, and patiently extracted the decayed slip of paper which it contained. A few isolated words in a neat hand were still legible after 32 years, and the whole of the date, viz. February 8, 1895. The summit was calm and warm, but the steep ice-slope that leads to it was swept by a frigid wind, which made the descent of the forty ice-steps hewn therein excessively trying to a cramponless

party. Lower down, too, the snow-slopes, by which one regains the Haast ridge from the glacier, were in a distinctly dangerous state, so that altogether the descent took slightly longer than the upward journey. The climb, however, is quite first-class, and Miss Barker may be proud to be the first lady to have reached this summit.

The weather now broke, and we returned to the hotel for a day or two of rest and ablution. On the 17th we went right through to the Malte Brun hut. This attractive little hut has only eight bunks, but that night, tempted by the cloudless day, eleven people congregated in it. One of them was Miss Beattie of the Ladies Alpine Club, who had crossed Graham's Saddle under the guidance of Peter Graham. We had discussed the possibility of such a meeting a year before in England, and the event was all the more pleasant for being quite unrehearsed. The fine day was only a flash in the pan. Next day Kurz and I, defying the omens, made a cramponed dash at Elie de Beaumont (10,200 ft.), and got to within 1000 ft. of the top, before a fierce sou'-wester caused a precipitate retreat. The tiny hut groaned beneath the weight of wet clothes hanging from its rafters by the time the last party to return had shed its paraphernalia. Despite the constriction and the steam we were a very cheerful party. Peter Graham's inexhaustible fund of climbing anecdotes kept us all interested and amused, till fine weather dispersed us in different directions on the 20th. That day the Barkers and we climbed Aiguille Rouge (9731 ft.), and on the next Malte Brun (10,421 ft.) by the favourite W. ridge.

For our last full week at the Hermitage, Kurz and I elected to bivouac up the Hooker valley. There are three tempting expeditions to be made at its head: La Pérouse, David's Dome, and the W. face of Cook. The Hooker hut is too low and too distant to be a good base for these peaks, while the upper bivouac-site on a slab at the head of the glacier at an altitude of 8000 ft., though extremely convenient to climb from, is horribly exposed and isolated. The alternative is to camp on the Pudding Rock (approx. 5800 ft.) 3 hours lower down and a short 3 hours above the hut, from which retreat is possible in almost any weather. Two years ago I had spent the best part of a day in helping to extend the diminutive camp-site, build a solid wall and weed out angular débris from the floor. Here, with the aid of two strong and cheery porters, Mahan and Sheeran, we established ourselves with provisions for five days on January 24. It was not altogether without misgivings that we committed ourselves to the shelter of my frail tent: so far we had not been favoured with more than two consecutive fine

days, and the Hooker endures the first fury of every storm that swoops upon these Alps. We had the truly amazing luck to get into camp on the first of seven rainless days running: most of them, it is true, were marred by high wind, but two were perfect climbing days. On the 25th we went half way to Baker's Saddle, where Kurz made a rough sketch of the W. face of Cook, which helped us greatly on our traverse later in the week. On the 26th we made the third ascent of David's Dome (10,443 ft.), whose rounded hump to the left of Cook is so familiar to all frequenters of the Hermitage. The first ascent was made on February 9, 1906, by Canon H. E. Newton, R. S. Low and Alec Graham from the La Pérouse glacier on the W. side of the divide by the N.W. arête to its junction with the main W. ridge and so to the summit. The second was by H. C. Chambers, H. S. Wright, and Conrad Kain in January 1916, from the upper Hooker bivouac to Harper's Saddle, and then by the very steep but sound rocks of the W. face, till they struck the W. ridge high up. Our route was a variation between the two. From Harper's Saddle we mounted the névé-field, which runs up into the W. face, crossed the W. ridge at the lower of two obvious notches, reached the upper notch by a somewhat icy couloir on the far side, and then climbed easy, broken rock-ribs on the N.W. face, rejoining the W. ridge at the point where it becomes a narrow but fairly level snow-arête. We had meant to start at 2.30, but I had put my alarum watch for safety into my hat, a stuffy receptacle which it so much resented, that it failed to go off with its usual regularity, and we did not get off till 4.45. The loss of these hours probably robbed us of the conquest of the formidable Dampier (11,287 ft.) by its unclimbed W. ridge. We did not reach the top of David's Dome till 11.10. The ridge to Dampier was long, serrated and icy in the upper section. Our minimum estimate was 3 hours up and 2 down, and that meant a night out, a prospect we did not relish. As it was we did not get in till 5.15, just before the sun retired behind Baker's Saddle. We had designs on Cook for the morrow, and got everything ready, so that it was 8.30 before we retired to our hard beds, leaving only $4\frac{1}{2}$ hours for sleep after a tiring day. When I woke at 1 A.M., clouds ominous of high wind dappled the sky. This prospect, combined with lack of sleep, determined us, after an agony of indecision, against starting. We woke again at 8 to face a glorious sun, and were torn in two between the fear of having lost our chance and the relief at having escaped the torture of driving tired muscles up 7000 ft.

of a great mountain. Eggs and bacon assuaged the mental conflict, and inaugurated a day of pure joy and perfect rest. We had an early evening meal, put everything ready again, and set the alarm for 1 A.M. At that hour the sky was again mottled, but this time with a perfectly uniform mackerel formation, almost motionless, which to my mind portended no evil. In fact, I was rash enough to predict a fine day and the probability of a break to-morrow: the calm day, indeed, materialized, but not the break. Kurz did not like the look of it himself, and in his abstracted study of the weather-signs allowed the eggs to get too hard. Realizing that the cause of the oversight was nothing but his intense anxiety to achieve Mt. Cook, I was easily able to forgive him. At 2.25 the tent was shut up, all our gear being stacked inside ready for removal later on. Rope and crampons were adjusted outside, and at 2.30 we were off on our supreme adventure.

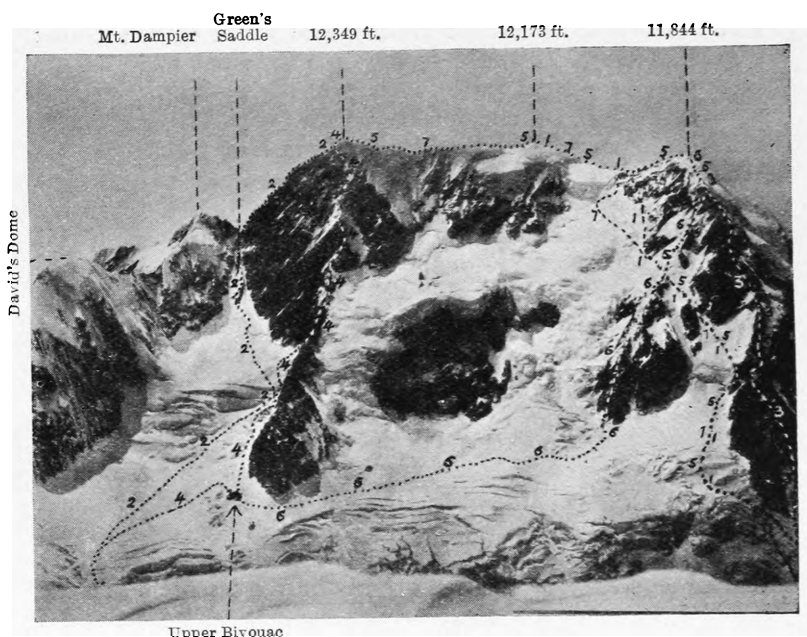
The traverse of the three peaks was done for the first time on January 3, 1913, by Miss Du Faur, Peter Graham and Darby Thomson. In her book she quotes a letter written to her after the climb by a member of the A.C., who says: 'That ridge of Mt. Cook would be shuddersome at the best of times. I have walked underneath it on both sides, and looked along it from the top, and I can confidently say that there is not a ridge like it in Switzerland: mixed rock and ice, perhaps, such as the Teufelsgrat of the Täschhorn and maybe others, but nowhere that endless stretch of knife-edge snow, perched far above everything else in the world as it must seem.' Her own account of the central part of it is as follows: 'Ever since we had decided to attempt the traverse, the steep knife-edged ridge between the middle and high peaks had been to me a haunting horror. From wherever you look at it, it appears impossible. Now the moment I had dreaded had arrived, and the reality was all that imagination had pictured it.' At the end she expresses a doubt whether mortal being could be found bold enough to repeat the ascent. The challenge was accepted on January 31, 1916, by the dauntless Conrad Kain alone with Mrs. Thompson of Wellington, a marvellous feat unequalled for daring in the annals of the Southern Alps. Years afterwards Mrs. Thompson wrote a brief account of it in the 'N.Z.A.J.', and her impressions may be summed up in the verse she quotes therein:

'My mountain calls, its floors are shod
With rainbows leading up to God.
But ah! the rugged ways and bleak,
That give upon that icy peak.'

The third and last traverse was made on February 24 of the same year, by Mr. S. Turner, Frank Milne and J. Lippe. The first and third parties had ice to contend with all along the ridge, while the second was favoured with good snow. The first started from a bivouac at about 7500 ft. at a point I shall refer to as Pt. 'A,' below the rock-ridge leading to the low peak. The others started from the upper Hooker bivouac at 8000 ft. None of the three had crampons.

At 2.30 we started traversing on an upward slant a stretch of glacier towards Pt. 'A' by lantern light, and soon had reason to regret our complete idleness yesterday. We ought to have trodden out a foolproof track while the sun shone. As it was, in attempting to avoid the vast schrund, which guards the portal between the rocks of Pt. 'A' and the ridge above, we ran into an *impasse* and had to wait for dawn to show us what proved to be the one possible through-route. We passed Pt. 'A' at 4.15, and proceeded without further setbacks through the wild ice-scenery above, following almost exactly the route marked '5' in the illustration to its junction with route '6.' Near this point we halted for breakfast from 7.15 to 7.40 at a height by aneroid of 10,070 ft. Above Pt. 'A,' the snow had been for some distance tiresomely crusty: on the steeper slopes above, however, it was so hard that Kurz with his shorter, blunter spikes, found the going a great strain on his leg muscles. After our meal, disliking the look of the upward traverse marked '1,' and still more the ice-clad rocks leading direct to the low peak, we struck out a line of our own more to the left towards what we deemed an easy spot to cross the final schrund. It proved very far from easy, however, and Kurz had some very awkward left-handed cutting to do, before it yielded. He then cut back to the right to turn the impending ice-wall above our heads, working at express speed: for the place was dangerous, and despite the early hour a small volley swept our route behind us a few minutes later. After some 50 steps he called me forward. I cut 30 more, and then found I could adhere safely without steps—thanks to my 'Eckensteins.' So I went to the end of my rope, cut a big step, and held firm while he scrambled up. By this method we saved much hard labour, and attained the ridge about a furlong N. of the low peak at 9.5, having accomplished 5800 ft. of ascent in slightly under six hours of marching. The low peak looked temptingly close, but we refused to be enticed, partly because we had no idea how long the rest of the climb would take us, and partly owing to the feeling that to diverge from our line just to bag an extra peak

would spoil the symmetry of a perfect traverse. So we set our faces northwards, and soon gained the foot of the great break, which bars approach to the central peak. Thanks to Kurz's colossal reach this grim obstacle was taken in our stride. Immediately above is the minor hump, to which the still unclimbed 'Anzac' ridge ascends from the east. Milne and I



Photo, E. Teichelmann.]

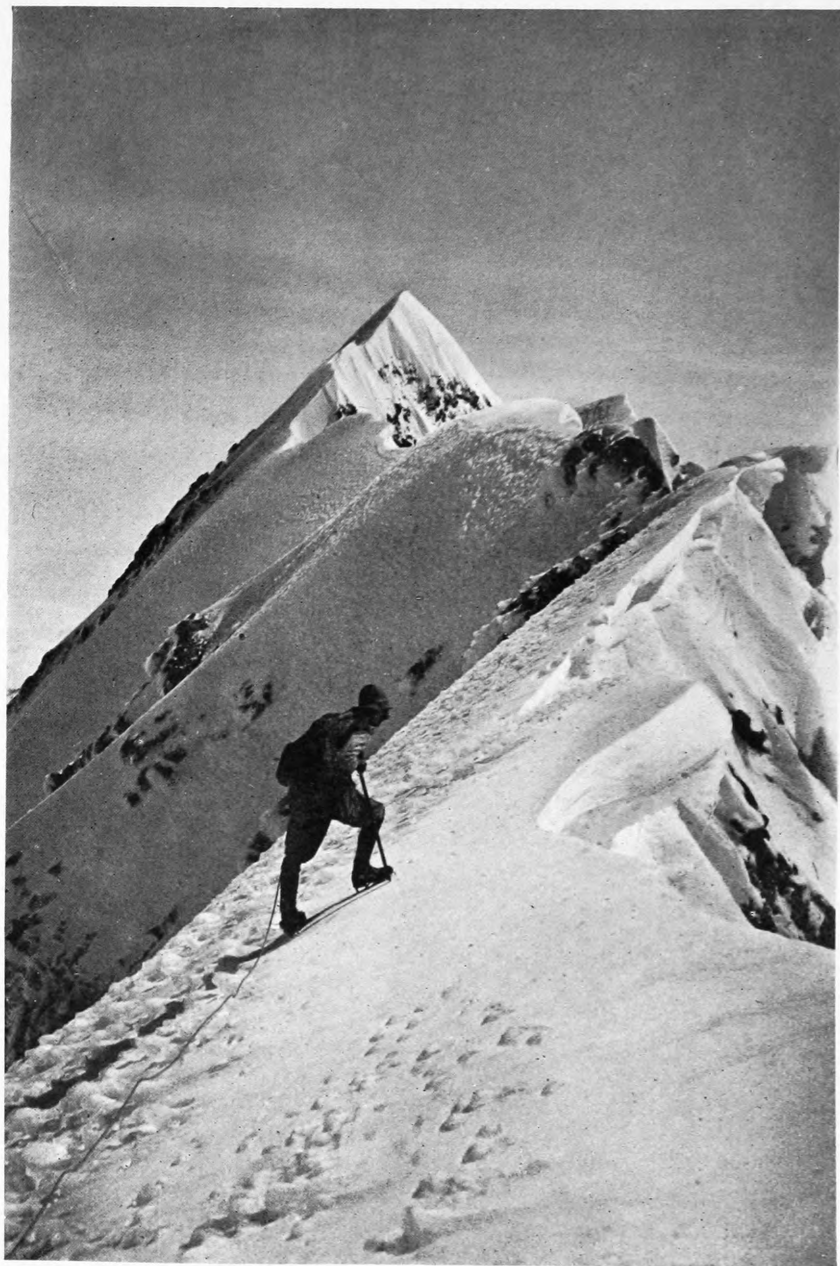
THE WEST FACE OF MT. COOK FROM SUMMIT OF LA PÉROUSE.

Routes from the Hooker side.

1. Fyfe, G. Graham and Clark. 20 Dec. 1894.
2. Fyfe, Graham and Clark. 28 Dec. 1894.
3. Mr. H. Sillem and P. Graham. Feb. 1906.
4. Mr. Earle with P. and A. Graham and J. Clark. 1909.
5. Miss Du Faur with P. Graham and D. Thomson. 1913.
6. Mr. S. Turner with P. Graham and F. Milne. 1914.

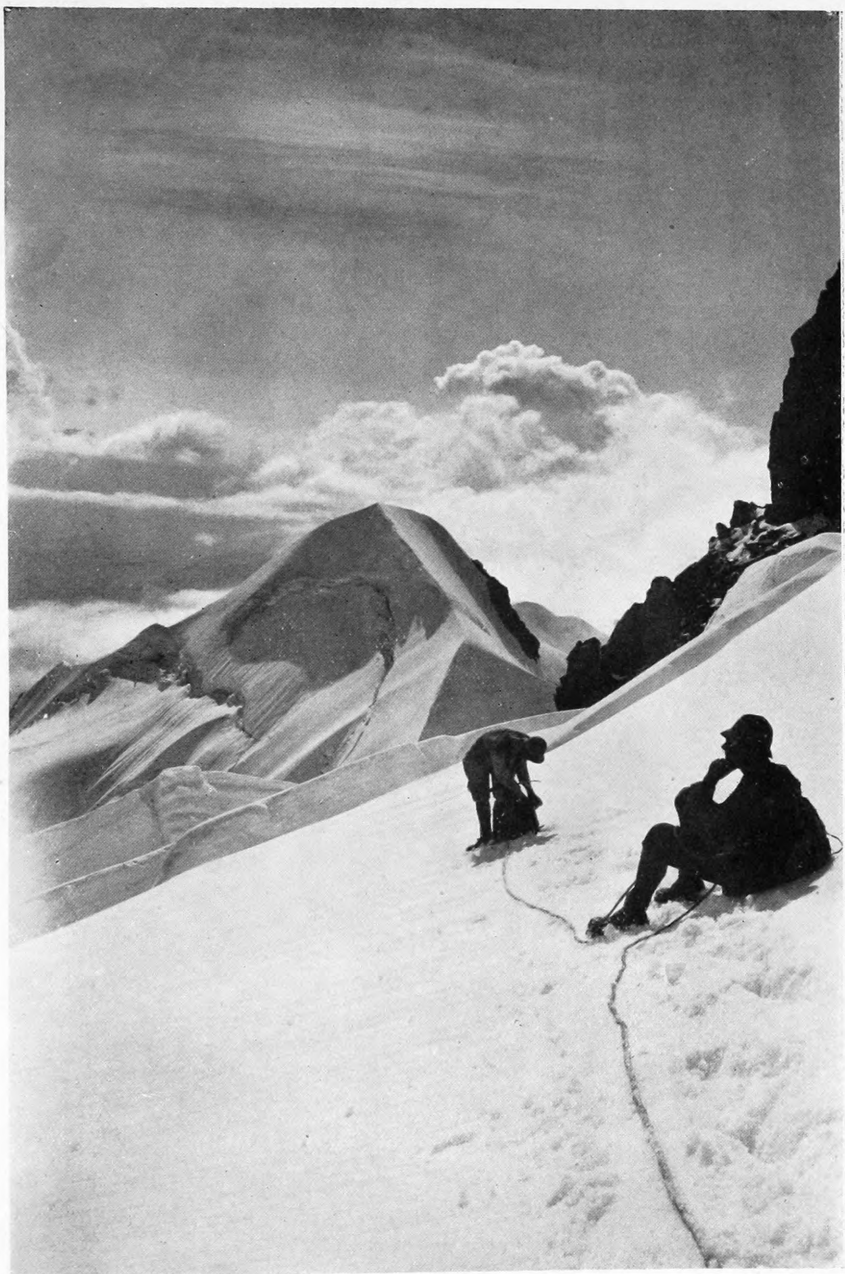
had had designs on this ridge two years before, and doubtless others before us, but I believe no party has ever started for it. Now that I have looked down its final 200 ft., the crux of the problem, my enthusiasm to be the pioneer of this new route has lost most of its edge. After several photos we mounted easily to the Central Peak (12,173 ft.) and there spent five minutes

(9.50 to 9.55). Before us lay the glorious mile-long undulating ice-ridge to the high peak, the most marvellous aerial highway I can ever hope to see. In all its length there are only two little rock-teeth. The E. face, if our photos do not lie, has an inclination in its upper part of just over 70° , while the W. slopes lie back at an angle of about 50° . The formation of the ice here was most curious. Imagine a mushroom with most of its stalk removed, bisected vertically and stuck into a bank: myriads of such ice-mushrooms dotted the slope as far as eye could see. No doubt the ever-recurring nor'westers are responsible both for these mushrooms and the ice-pillars on Tasman, but I am not enough of a scientist to understand the process which produces them. Our crampons bit well, and progress was fast, as long as we kept the rope quite taut: a moment's inattention, and it embraced lovingly as many mushrooms as it had time to lassoo. It would have been pleasanter to utilize the rim of snow above them, the inner edge of the extensive cornice that hung its frozen waves over the Tasman face, but prudence, of course, vetoed the idea. Such was the merit of our spikes, however, that we cut not a single step along the whole ridge, and, despite several pauses for photography, which were richly rewarded, we had breasted the last sharp rise and occupied the throne of Aorangi by 10.30. With the serious part of our undertaking behind us and at peace with ourselves and the world, we feasted on delicacies worthy of such a mountain. How calm the summit was, may be gathered from the fact that the subsequent pipe was ignited at the third match. As we smoked, we studied the extensive panorama before us, and I came once more to the conclusion that, however interesting topographically, it has not half the charm of the view from lesser summits. Since 1913 every descent of Mt. Cook, save one, has been made by the Linda route, and we had no idea of varying the procedure, especially as it was familiar ground to me. Starting again at 11, we had put the ice-cap behind us by 11.30. The summit rocks gave more trouble. There had been enough snow on them the previous week to repulse an amateur party, after they had ascended the Linda glacier in remarkably good time. There had been a storm since, and we found a mess of water-logged slush filling all the crannies: but there was no *verglas*, and the rocks are so easy in themselves that the descent only occupied an hour. Thereafter, having plenty of time in hand, we sauntered down the glacier, only bestirring ourselves at the obvious danger-points, and stopping whenever the whim seized us to eat or smoke or photograph. The heat was now



Phot. M. Kurz.

THE ICE-RIDGE AND HIGH PEAK OF MT. COOK
From near the Central Peak.



Phot. M. Kurz.

LE RECEVEUR, FROM BELOW THE WEST RIDGE OF Mt. TORRES.

intense, and the light so strong, that all our Linda negatives were badly over-exposed. From 2.30 to 3.10 we had a last halt in a safe spot above the Silberhorn corner. Below, in the gut of the Linda, we had the nearest approach to a hold-up that we experienced all day. We came to a place where only one line of advance was possible, over a horribly soft bridge. After some hesitation, though we could see no way through below, we crossed it, myself on all fours and Kurz by a method which combined dignity with caution. There was, indeed, no alternative, and, as usually happens, the vice relaxed its grip, just when the pressure was beginning to get uncomfortable. This was the last effort of the mountain, and beyond we slid rapidly past the corner and out on to the Grand Plateau. Still vigorous, I kicked up the 600 ft. to Glacier Dome, whence we sank speedily to the haven of the Haast hut. At 5.30 two happy men fell upon two tins of pears and apricots, and lubricated the inner furnace with oceans of tea, before retiring to sleep on a delicious mattress after four nights of a stony couch.

It may be of interest to give a table of the times taken from point to point by the various parties on this route :

Party	Bivouac	Start	Low Pk.	Cent. Pk.	High Pk.	Hut	Total
1	Pt. A. (7500 ft.)	02.00	07.00	09.30	13.30—15.00	22.00	20 hours
2	Upper (8000 ft.)	03.40	*11.00	(?)	14.40—15.25	21.40	18 hours
3	Upper (8000 ft.)	01.05	04.30	09.05	14.05—15.00	03.00	26 hours
4	Lower (5370 ft.)	02.30	*09.05	09.50	10.30—11.00	17.30	15 hours

* Ridge N. of Low Peak.

I have given these times merely to convince New Zealand climbers of the immense advantages conferred by crampons, particularly on amateur parties, few of whom, I believe, could tackle the immense labour this traverse entails without them, and complete the climb within 24 hours : and also to refute the heresies promulgated on the subject in New Zealand by Mr. Turner. 'I don't believe,' he says, 'in crampons, staples, or any artificial means of climbing whatever, as it makes it necessary to watch one more thing, and the risk of over-balance, or a crampon coming off, on one of our steep slopes is a risk not worth taking.'

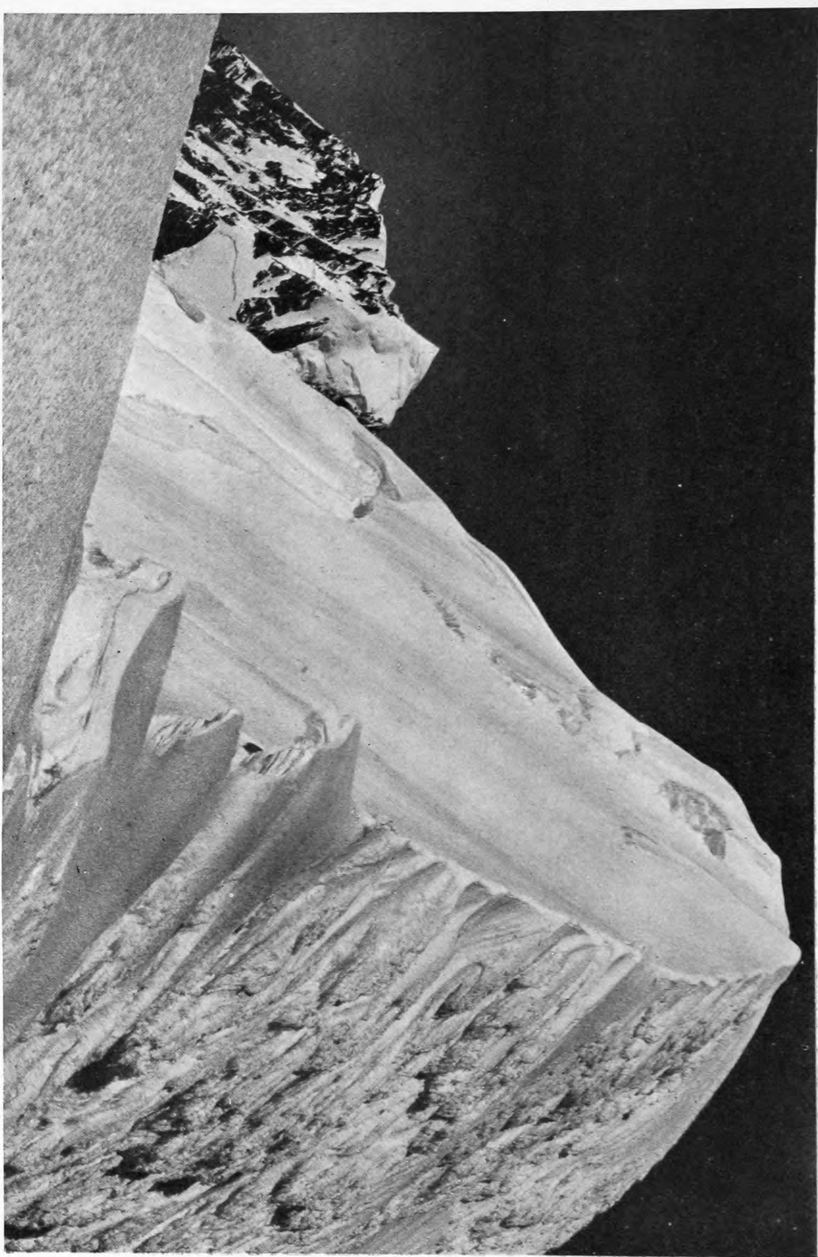
The next day was fine for our return to the hotel, and the following for the recovery of our camp from the Pudding Rock, which was done for us by the Hermitage staff. Then a not unwelcome storm gave us three days to rest and prepare for our crossing to Waiho, where we were due to meet Hugh Chambers about February 4. We had been altogether nearly

seven weeks at the Hermitage : during all that time Mr. Clarke, the manager, Clem Williams, the chief guide, and his brother Vic, and the whole staff had done everything in their power to ensure our comfort and further our plans, even when these entailed inconvenience and extra work to themselves. It was not without a feeling of real regret that we set out on February 3 to tramp up to the Ball hut for the fifth and last time. On the 4th with 30 lb. swags we toiled against a strong gusty wind over Graham's Saddle, on the crest of which we met a gale so violent that we could not have surmounted the final ice-slope without the anchorage of our crampons. We had started at 3.15, and reached the Almer bivouac above the great ice-fall of the Franz Josef at 2.30 in rain which threatened to get worse. After an hour's rest and a brew of tea we took advantage of a temporary clearing to make a dash for the Defiance Hut, situated on the left bank between the two falls. Peter Graham had warned us in January that the upper fall was quite impassable this season, and had given me explicit directions how to avoid it : we were to ascend a spur from the bivouac, and cross the tributary Almer glacier on an obvious bench, contour across the head of the Carrel creek, and descend the perversely named 'No Go' creek, whence an easy passage across the glacier to the hut was assured. Lapse of time had muddled my memory, and when we arrived at the head of Carrel creek I assured Kurz that our instructions were to commit ourselves to the repulsive gorge that fell away at our feet and disclosed beyond a vista of cruel and wicked sharks' teeth. He naturally demurred, but I was adamant. Down we went, and by dint of our good crampons and much exciting saltation, endured without reproach and with exemplary patience by my trusty companion, we laboured through the lower half of the fall and entered the hut at 6.45. Next day we had more excitement, skirmishing with the lower ice-fall, to get to the bush track on the right bank. From the hut to the path took 2 hours, and at the end, having escaped finally from the wilderness of séracs, Kurz held his crampons aloft and uttered the dramatic words 'My crampons, I kiss you !' Chambers met us on the track and led us to Waiho, where we received a warm welcome from the Grahams. Our plan now was to bivouac high up the Fox glacier, and try to repeat some of the successes which fell to Canon H. E. Newton, Dr. Teichelmann, and Alec Graham in 1906 and 1907. The rest of the day was well spent in studying photos of the scene of our proposed activities. Next day was wet, but the camp-

gear and commissariat were arranged, and on the 7th we drove down by service car to the start of the Fox track with Dave Graham, a nephew of the famous brothers, and a Maori, Joe Bannister, to help us carry the stores necessary for six or seven days' absence. When all our separate packages were cast forth from the recesses of the car, rucksacks and sugar-sacks, ropes and paper parcels, imagination boggled as to how they were going to be stowed on our backs. The load to be divided must have been close on 250 lbs. Our porters shouldered a liberal 60 lbs. apiece, and the rest adhered somehow to us three. At the slow crawl such burdens enforce, we slouched through the bush, then along the right bank of the Fox river to the snout, stumbled across its dreary moraines, and a little later established our first camp on the left bank under an old moraine cliff, which looked and was perfectly safe, until a mischievous kea spotted our camp from a distance, circled round for a bit forming his plan of campaign, and straightway began to prise out loose boulders directly above us with his beak and launch them at us with screams of delight. Having scared him away with some accurate sharp-shooting, we lay down to sleep, trusting that if he returned the missiles would bound over our prostrate forms. Next day we mounted the glacier till the lower fall forced us into the gully between the ice and the hillside. Above the fall is a fairly level section, on which we crossed to the scrub-covered bench on the side of the Chancellor ridge, near the head of which we pitched our second camp. The shortest way to reach the upper névé of the Fox from here is to skirt the edge of the glacier below the continuation of the Chancellor ridge: late in the season this becomes impossible, and a long détour must be made to the top of the ridge and down on to the névé from above. To save time in the morning, the porters and I with all the tinned goods explored the short route, and, with two deviations on to the steep rock-wall that bounds the glacier, managed to get through to the névé, where we made an oasis of tins in the league-wide desert of snow. On the morrow we were on the move at 4.15 and reached the dump at 5.20. Here the porters had to leave us to secure their own retreat to the Defiance hut, a complicated route for which clear weather and plenty of time are essential. They unloaded the heavy stores which they had carried so patiently, and left us with hearty good wishes. Dismay seized us, as we gazed at the hateful bulk of the burdens our own shoulders had now to bear. True that the final camp-site looked comparatively close: true also

that the total load had by now diminished to some 170 lbs., thanks to consumption of food and reduction of camp-gear. But it is a problem to stow over 50 lbs. into and on to even a capacious sack, and when we had filled, as we thought, every inch of available space, we looked round and discovered that the bread and butter were still on the ground, looking most forlorn. Finally all was got on board somehow, except some broken bread, and we staggered off, soon to find ourselves in a maze of crevasses, the threading of which was nervous work with so much top-hamper. Three hours later we came to an end of our travail under the cliff of Pioneer Ridge. Of our bivouac the less said the better. We rejected the old 1906-1907 site, disliking its extreme exposure and lack of water, in favour of one where we obtained fair protection plus water, but suffered the acme of discomfort on a rocky floor strewn with large sharp scree. Though we were at over 7000 ft., the cold was not severe, and I found that I could sacrifice some of my clothes to pad my back without freezing in my light sleeping-bag, so that, though the boon of sleep was denied, I procured some alleviation of a torture which a Spanish Inquisitor would have been proud to invent.

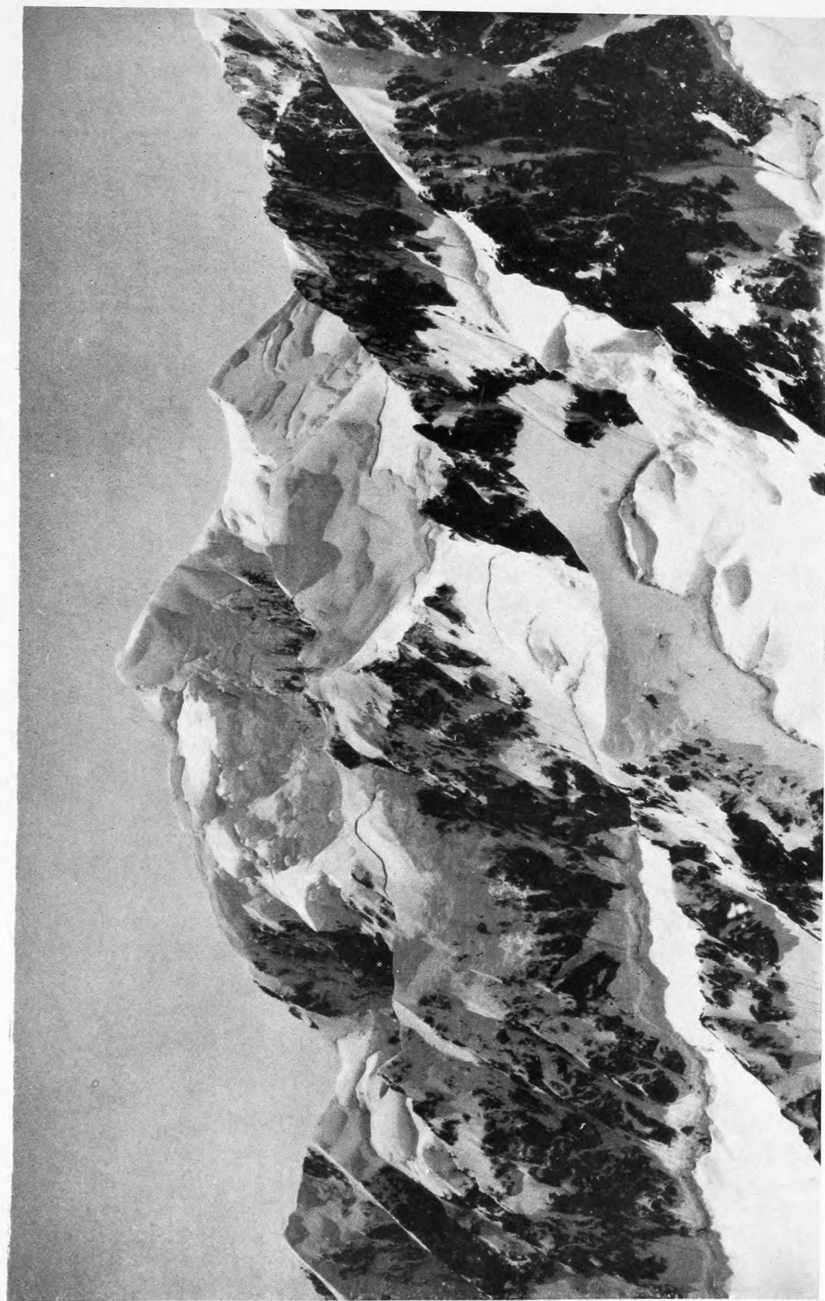
The same afternoon, while Chambers, who without training had manfully borne his share of the common burden, rested and ordered the camp, Kurz and I climbed the virgin Le Receveur, the next peak to Torres on the ridge running W. from Tasman. Its height is given on the latest map as 9562 ft. Besides securing a first ascent, we gained knowledge of the W. side of Torres, which was of great use two days later. From camp we went to the col between Torres and our peak, whence an interesting little snow-ridge took us to the top. A depressing drizzle thwarted our design of attacking the next peak, Big Mac, as well, and sent us straight home, the whole expedition taking only 5 hours. On our return we found that Chambers had erected one end of the tent on a clothes-line of string, secured to crevices in the rock-face by sardine-tin openers, while the entrance-end was strutted on an ice-axe and tautened by some odd bits of spunyarn knotted together. This crazy shelter might have supplied a Heath Robinson with every detail for a caricature of a Mountaineers' Paradise, especially if the artist had caught me crawling out of its wholly inadequate doorway in my old climbing suit, by now in a lamentable state of decomposition. Supper was also ready, the chief attraction being one of Chambers's famous tomato soups. This is a *mélange* of many ingredients, blending into a delicious whole,



Phot. H. E. Porter.

MT. TASMAN FROM THE NORTH SHOULDER

Showing the final 350ft. of the North Ridge. Behind, on the left, is Mt. Cook.



Phot. H. E. Porter.

MT. TASMAN FROM DAVID'S DÔME.

On the left is the West Ridge descending to Mt. Torres; on the right the South Ridge and the Silber Horn. Below is the La Pérouse Glacier.

which courses like nectar through the veins. 'Eat soup and keep well,' says Campbell's popular American advertisement, 'Let no day go by without its plateful of hot, nourishing, delicious soup.' We took Mr. Campbell's advice, but to the profit of his rival Mr. Heinz of the 57 varieties. There was absolutely no temptation to linger in bed, the tent being a tight fit for three even on perfect ground, while here we had to conform our three big bodies to the accidental deformities of the mountain side. I was out before dawn to start the cooker. There was a high wind on the divide, and after breakfast we gave the weather an hour to make up its mind. It decided in our favour, and we set out at 8.15 to traverse Haast and Lendenfeld *via* Pioneer Pass. I had twice reached the pass from the other side, and each time the upper névé of the Fox had appeared to be a gently-sloping, almost unbroken snow-field. In reality it is furrowed with immense crevasses, which are invisible, as one approaches from below, almost to the very lip. The two miles from camp to pass took $2\frac{1}{4}$ hours. After a halt on the pass we started again at 11.5 to make a new route up Haast (10,295 ft.), which so far had only been ascended once, by Canon H. E. Newton and Alec Graham in February 1907 up the S. ridge. Haast has at least three summits of over 10,000 ft., of which, as far as I know, only the lowest, that on the main divide, has been climbed. Having scaled an easy rock-buttress above the pass, we attained the great E. ridge at noon. It had formerly been one of my ambitions to climb this ridge in all its length from the Haast hut. We had followed the lower third of it for two hours on our ascent of Haidinger, and we now spent $1\frac{1}{2}$ hours on the final section, leaving the central and probably most difficult part still untouched. I fancy the whole climb from the hut would take a strong party not less than 8 hours, and as very little of the ground is easy, almost as much time would be required for the descent. The portion we now wrestled with proved to be an exceedingly sharp snow-arête, broken by passages of ice. Near the top we were confronted with a most sensational step, where the snow rose at a steeper angle than any of us had ever met before on a sharp ridge. It was a difficult task stamping steps up it with one's body hard against the slope. After some 40 ft. it turned to ice, and I had to cut across the steep face to a rock-patch, from which vantage-point peering round the corner I was relieved to find a gentler slope of rock and snow, by which to turn the obstacle. The summit fell at 1.45, too late for us to explore the rock-ridge to the other tops, unless we renounced once

more the traverse of Lendenfeld. The latter made the greater appeal, and after a short halt we donned crampons and set sail down the ridge to the col, for which we agreed to suggest the name of Haast Saddle: then up again to Lendenfeld (10,456 ft.) and down to Engineer Pass. On completing this stretch Kurz and I had a thrill of pleasure at the thought that in three expeditions we had trodden every foot of the divide between the Silberhorn and Haidinger. All day long there had been a wonderful blue light on Tasman and Cook, which pleased the eye so much that one assumed that it would also please the camera. In this belief I expended films prodigally, but with much less success than usual. It was now 4 p.m., and high time to think of home. The ensuing descent for quite 500 ft. needed great caution: the route lay between two dangerous couloirs, at first on rock, then on bad snow with ice close beneath the surface. Below we wisely resisted the temptation to make a bee-line for our camp, and struck off at right angles to rejoin our morning tracks. We got in at 7.15, to enjoy a picturesque, robber-band sort of supper by lantern-light, which was unduly extended owing to our disinclination to writhe on our Procrustean couches for a second night.

Gladly I hailed the first glimmer of light on the 11th, and crawled out to welcome another fine day. This time we were away by 7.20 with Torres (10,376 ft.) for our objective. The only previous ascent of this mountain was by Canon H. E. Newton, Dr. Teichelmann and Alec Graham on February 4, 1907. Starting at 3.40 from a bivouac very close to ours, they had taken to the rocks before the rise of the glacier to the col between Torres and Le Receveur, and then followed the W. ridge throughout, reaching the top at 12.15, and regaining camp by the same route at 8.40. Alec Graham had suggested to us that we might find a shorter route on the S. side of their ridge, and we had confirmed this idea from Le Receveur on the 9th. We gained the col at 9.25 and after a halt till 10.5 sped on our crampons up the glaciated face. A mile-long crescent *schrund* guarded the heights above, which could only be crossed far away to the right, so that we were forced on to a subsidiary ridge, where unexpected ice impeded our progress. The W. ridge, when we got to it, was another of those narrow snow-arêtes, to which we were now so well accustomed. Along it we stamped a cautious way to a solitary patch of rocks, where Chambers, who for some time had been combating his enemy, *mal-de-montagne*, regretfully decided to rest and await our return (12.30). The top seemed only an hour away, and we

went on, promising to be as quick as we could. The snow-*arête* after some hundreds of yards impinged on a rock-buttress, which had several concealed gendarmes in its upper reaches ; these rocks would be quite exhilarating, if only they could be swept clean of surface *débris*. At 1.50 we gained the top, a delicate snow-cone, from which we once more worshipped the majesty of Tasman, still looming far above us, and only attainable, as far as we could see, by a party willing to sleep out on the ridge. When we rejoined Chambers, we found him feeling almost vigorous again, as a result of deep-breathing exercises. Diverging nowhere from our morning route, we re-entered the bivouac at 6.25. The clouds seemed ominous of approaching storm, but a third night had to be endured before we could start to escape. We had hoped to return by the high-level route from the head of the Fox to the Franz Josef over Mts. Roon and Moltke, with the tracks of our porters to guide us. But these had completely vanished, and a mistake, only too easy in bad visibility, might be too costly to tired men, still heavily laden. Kurz, it is true, was as fit as ever in body and mind : but we had put Chambers's untrained muscles to too severe a test, and lack of sleep had robbed me of my mental alertness. So we descended the Fox, taking our time, as the weather held up after all, and despite some rebuffs and anxieties in the ice-falls got through to the ramshackle tourists' hut at the entrance to the bush before nightfall. Tired though we were, the insect life of the hut proved too venomous, and we soon migrated to a stretch of sand on the river bank, where the pests dared not pursue us, and there enjoyed a perfect sleep. Sometimes excessive greed for blood defeats its own object, and the disgusted victim breaks away from the toils of the blood-usurer. Next day we returned to Waiho in bright sunshine : we arrived there feeling like Lord Fleetwood in 'The Amazing Marriage' after his first mountain walk. 'Up there,' he says to the man who had introduced him to new delights, 'one walks with the divinities. . . . You're right over and over again, when you say the dirty sweaters are nearer the angels for cleanliness than my Lord and Lady Sybarite out of a bath, in chemical scents.' For all that we did enjoy our baths, and still more the reflection that we had once again utilised every single day of a week's fine weather, and had concluded our investment of the enchanted ground, of which Tasman is the citadel, with a success which outdid my most optimistic dreams.

How much of that success I owe to Kurz's splendid

icemanship and equable temper will, I hope, have appeared in the course of my paper. For the success of our last campaign a special word of thanks is due to the Graham brothers, whose encouragement and expert knowledge were invaluable to the party on ground completely new to them, and who supplied our needs with such detailed thoroughness that nothing of importance was missing in our camp. Nor shall we forget the pleasant days we spent after our return, when we could afford to laugh at the teeming rain, which kept us not unwilling prisoners indoors. One last word of thanks must be rendered to the demon who presides over Friday. Sealy, the Silberhorn and Tasman, Malte Brun, Cook, Graham's Saddle, Torres, all these succumbed on that reputedly unlucky day. But the secret of how we won the demon's favour is a mystery, which I cannot reveal to the uninitiated.

SOME SPANISH MOUNTAINS.

By W. T. ELMSLIE.

THE SIERRA NEVADA.

TOWARDS the end of last July we ¹ made a brief visit to the Sierra Nevada—the highest range of mountains in Europe, it will be remembered, after the Alps. We ascended the two highest summits, and traversed the ridge between them, thus seeing what is admittedly the finest scenery to be found in those parts.

The range is distinctly disappointing, and has been over-written, although Charles Packe's article in 'A.J.' ⁴ gives a good general impression of the district. John Ormsby's remark ('A.J.' 3, 12) that 'the north face of the Wetterhorn . . . is soft pastoral scenery compared with the Corral de la Velea' is simply grotesque. Though on a much larger scale, the main range is little wilder than the ridge of Helvellyn. The crags are for the most part composed of rotten outcrops of rock, divided by slopes of shale; and though many of the corries are fine and impressive, they are more akin to British hills in character than to the Alps.

An electric tram now runs at frequent intervals from Granada up the Genil valley to a terminus ('Sierra') a mile or two beyond Güejar. The valley presents imposing gorge scenery

¹ Messrs. G. Manley, R. G. R. West, and the writer.



Phot. G. Manley.

PART OF N.E. FACE OF NARANJO.
The Great Slabs.



Phot. W. T. Elmslie.

CORRAL AND PICACHO DE LA
VELETA.

The Summit is immediately to the
right of the vertical crack in the centre.

at places. From the terminus a rough road winds up the hill for $4\frac{1}{2}$ kilometres to the Hotel Sierra Nevada. This is under the same management as the Alhambra Palace at Granada, and is thoroughly comfortable, though expensive. It is beautifully situated, with fine gardens, and is a popular centre for winter sports. It claims to be at a height of 1500 metres, but this is perhaps an over-estimate. Close by is an unpretentious *posada*, which is said to be quite good.

A way may be found amongst a labyrinth of paths up the hillside to the W. of the Barranco San Juan, till the patches of barley, maize, and potatoes are exchanged for the open hillside at San Francisco (about 2250 m.; $2\frac{1}{2}$ hours), an unoccupied building resembling an observatory. There is a peasant's cottage alongside. The Picacho de la Veleta (3430 m.) is now in sight at the head of the valley, and is attained in three hours by keeping up the ridge on the right, till it is possible to look down on the tiny patch of *névé* (dignified by the title of the 'most southerly glacier in Europe') in the Corral. The ridge hereabouts is narrow and slabby, and the easiest ascent of the last thousand feet lies somewhat to the W. of it.

It may be possible to descend directly on to the ridge which connects the Veleta with Mulhacen; but we preferred to avoid the crags, turning them by way of the Col de la Veleta, and so keeping along to the S. of the ridge. This involved descents into the heads of four valleys, and long traverses on large, loose scree; but the route was interesting throughout, and it would clearly have been foolish to try to keep along the ridge itself, which was largely composed of crumbling little crags.

The N. face of Mulhacen and of the Alcazaba is quite imposing at a distance; but the dark crags are seen to be much broken up when they are approached more nearly. It is not correct to speak of the Corral occupying the whole area between the Veleta and Mulhacen on the N. side; there are several quite distinct corries here.

Mulhacen (3481 m.) has two open shelters on its summit, and a ruinous chapel, which we found to be half filled with snow. Three to four hours should be allowed in each direction for the traverse between it and the Veleta.

THE PICOS DE EUROPA.

If John Ormsby exaggerated the charms of the Sierra Nevada, he certainly did not do the same for the Picos, highly as he spoke of them. These mountains lie in the N. of Spain, and are most easily approached from Santander, by rail to

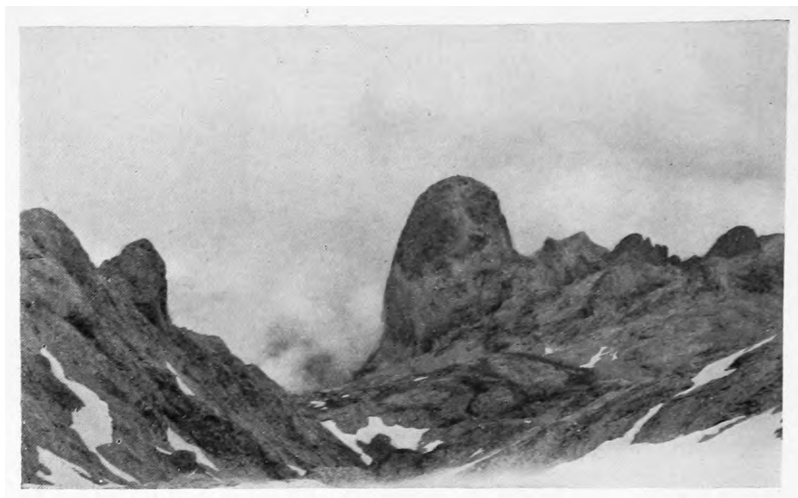
Unquera, and thence by motor-bus. The two chief characteristics of the district are the remarkable narrow gorges through which the rivers flow, and the fine serrated summits of the mountains. The rock is limestone, and if the higher regions are barren and waterless, the river valleys are luxuriant with vegetation.

The highest summit is the Torre de Cerredo (2642 m.), whilst the Llambrion falls short by only a few feet. Ormsby attempted to ascend the latter, but reached a subsidiary point only, comforting himself with the reflection that to spend a night out in the hope of reaching the higher point was 'altogether too much honour for a mountain not 9000 ft.'

There are only two books which give any useful information about these mountains; and the number of ascents they describe is comparatively small. As the district has only recently been explored by climbers, the probability is that a large number of the summits (many of them unnamed in the maps) are as yet unascended; but this we were unable definitely to ascertain.

A hut has been opened in the Canal de Camburero, an hour or two above Bulnes, which is easily reached by way of Arenas de Cabrales. It is situated rather too low down to be really useful as a centre of exploration; but we were able to use it for the ascent of the Cerredo, by way of the Collada de Arenizas alta, and a snow slope which led high up its E. face. This is the only known route for ascending the mountain.

The great attraction of the vicinity, however, is the Naranjo de Bulnes, a mighty rock monolith, standing clear above its surroundings a thousand feet or more. It is not beautiful; it is astounding. Close examination reveals that it is composed of extraordinarily steep and smooth slabs, offering the climber neither satisfactory hold nor resting-place. We attempted to ascend on the N.E., from the top of the gully which runs up on that side of the mountain; but after vainly endeavouring to find a justifiable route across the great slabs, we retired to examine the face from the other side of the gully. Unfortunately, thick mist came on at this precise time, and only cleared at sunset. The examination which we then made did not make the route to be followed at all certain. Obviously a guideless party would require to spend considerable time in investigation before making the ascent. We were sorry that we had not accepted the offer of two local men (one of Arenas, one of Cain) to accompany us to the top; but whether they had themselves been there is by no means sure.

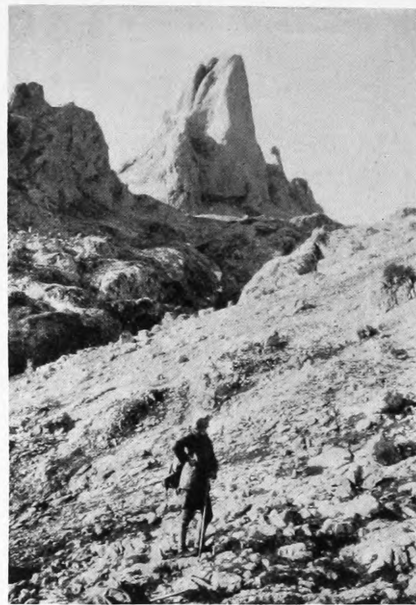


NARANJO DE BULNES
from S.W.



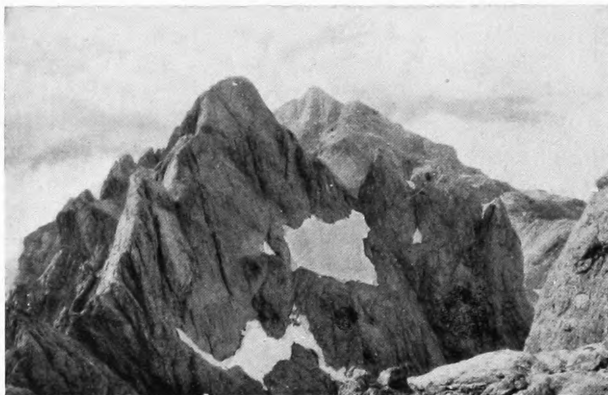
Photos. G. Manley.

TORRE DE CERREDO
from E.



Phot. G. Manley.

NARANJO DE BULNES
from S.W.



Phot. W. T. Elmslie.

VIEW N. FROM CERREDO
[the Peaks are probably the Tête Labrouche and Pico de
los Cabrones].

The first ascent was made by a local man, called 'El Cainejo,' with Don Pedro Pidal, Marquis of Villaviciosa de Asturias, in 1904. Gustav Schulze, of the Munich Ak. Alpenverein, made the next ascent, also by the N.E. face, alone—a truly astonishing feat. He descended on the S.E., but gave it as his opinion that this route could not be used for the ascent, as in one place an *abseil* was absolutely necessary. The visitors' book at the hut, however, contains a description of an ascent made by a party which included a woman, led by a local man, Victor Martinez. They ascended from the S.E., and descended by the N.E. Whether there have been any other ascents is doubtful; but on the summit we could see a pole; and there is a picture postcard purporting to show V. Martinez on the top.

The Naranjo is by no means the only difficult peak in the group. De Saint-Saud considers that the Torre Santa, above Caín, is quite as hard; but the Spanish writers consider it perfectly easy! There seems to be a question of national pride involved here, as the Torre Santa was first climbed by Labrousche, a Frenchman. And quite apart from these, there are peaks innumerable, all difficult apparently, and many of them presenting really serious problems.

An expert party would find enough to occupy them in the Picos for several weeks. And they would be ill-advised to make a shorter visit. The topographical difficulties are considerable, partly owing to the large number of rock summits crowded together into a comparatively small area, partly owing to the number of deep gorges with practically impassable sides. De Saint-Saud's maps are good, but not nearly good enough. The mistakes that we discovered were few, but the omissions were many; and no attempt is made to indicate the tracks. Moreover, the continual occurrence of *hoyos*, or large circular depressions, like enormous dry lake-beds, tends to increase the confusion.

The district is quite unspoiled. We found the natives very friendly, though their dialect was hard to comprehend. The question of food supplies was rather difficult; in villages like Caín there are no regular shops, and Señora Maria, in whose house we stayed, had very little with which to provide us.

There are two or three little glaciers, but they are so small as to be almost negligible. In mid-July, however, there were considerable patches of snow, which not only provided us with water to drink, but frequently offered a convenient means of ascent and a rapid glissade on the return journey.

The Picos de Europa, as a climbing ground, may be compared with the High Tatra or with the Dolomites. They differ from the former in the composition of their rock, and in the lack of streams and mountain lakes. They differ from the Dolomites in being much more closely grouped together, in the lack of facilities for climbers, and in the absence (so far as we could observe) of large grassy uplands. To the explorer, and the searcher after new climbs, they present far greater opportunities than either of the other groups. As to the actual difficulty of the climbing, our observation bears out Schulze's words :

'The special difficulties of the ascent' [he is referring to the Naranjo] 'consist not so much in the steepness of the rock, with its inherent dangers, such as are met with in the Dolomites and in the limestone mountains of the Tyrol, as in the extraordinarily smooth condition of the rock, some of the steps being most risky.'

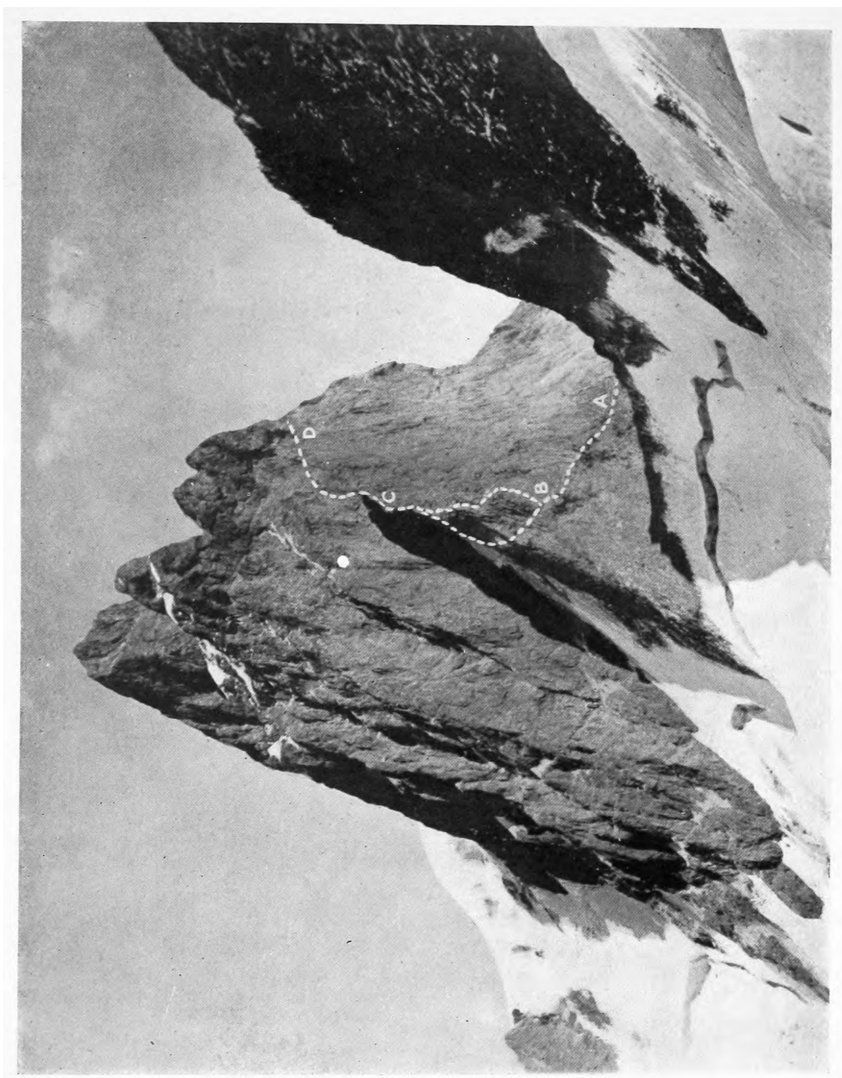
Books and Maps.

'Picos de Europa,' published by the Club Alpino Español, Madrid, 1918, is unfortunately now out of print. It is a delightful book, enriched with numerous photographs, and edited by Pedro Pidal and Zabala. Descriptions of the principal peaks are given, but the accounts of the ascents are not very clear. The Naranjo, however, is dealt with very fully.

'Monographie des Picos de Europa,' by Le Comte de Saint-Saud, Paris, Henry Barrère, 21 Rue du Bac, 1922. This is another delightful and well-illustrated book, also, unhappily, out of print. The maps, however, which were drawn up by L. Maury on the basis of the author's observations, and which accompany the book, are still obtainable from the publisher. These maps are quite indispensable for anyone visiting this district. The 1 : 100,000, with contours, is fairly accurate so far as it goes ; but there are serious omissions, and only the main paths are marked. The same must be said of the 1 : 50,000 (uncontoured). As in the Spanish book, the principal summits are described, but the information about ascents is not always adequate.

No other books are of any practical value to the mountaineer in this region.

For the Sierra Nevada, the best map is sheet 85 of the 'Mapa Militar Itinerario de España,' 1 : 200,000, revised 1916. It is extremely poor, but there is nothing better available.



LA MEIJE.
Showing the W. arête and N. face (in profile) taken from below the Brèche.

THE WESTERN OR BRÈCHE ARÊTE OF LA MEIJE.

IN 'A.J.' 33, 215 seq., the late Mr. Harold Raeburn published a very instructive article, 'The W. Arête of the Meije.' The somewhat freak photograph was, however, so difficult to understand that the article left me, as probably others, in a state of some perplexity as to the exact line of ascent.

Mr. C. H. Brook, who has been a close student of the Dauphiné the last few years, showed a photograph of the arête at a Club Exhibition not so long ago. He was good enough to tell me that Mr. C. M. Sleeman of Queens' College, Cambridge, possessed an even more instructive picture which is here reproduced. The photographer's name is unknown.

M. Pierre Dalloz, the authority on the Alps of the Dauphiné and director of the Syndicat d'Initiative du Dauphiné at Grenoble, has, at my request, kindly marked the lines followed on this W. arête, which is an independent route only so far as the *Pas du Chat* when it merges into the ordinary S. route just below the Glacier Carré. It is conceivable that this W. arête might be followed over Les Doigts and the Pic du Glacier Carré.

M. Dalloz writes :

'A is the Brèche de la Meije. A to B indicates a traverse below the crest on the La Bérarde side. One cuts a little couloir in which the rock is bad, and regains the arête at B in a little gap well seen in a profile picture. The actual crest of the arête can however be followed.

'At B at the foot of the great escarpment formed by a series of slabs separated by little platforms one can mount straight up (Loustalot) or make a bad flank march on the N. (La Grave) side, which leads into or close to the bed of the great couloir seen in the photograph. One thus gains the *épaule* C and follows the fairly narrow crest installing at the point where it is cut off a short *rappel*. Finally a wide "vire aux bicyclettes" leads to D, just above the Pas du Chat, where the ordinary route is joined.

'To my knowledge the arête has been followed four times :

'(1) By C. Verne with Pierre Gaspard père et fils, Maximin Gaspard and J. B. Rodier, in 1885.¹

¹ *Alps of the Dauphiny*, Coolidge edition, 1905, p. 62.

‘ (2) MM. Main and Plossu in 1919.²

‘ (3) J. P. Loustalot and Mlle. Y. Millièrè in 1922.³ They followed the crest throughout.

‘ (4) Jean Vernet and R. Toumayeff in 1926. They followed a route between Verne’s and Loustalot’s.

‘ Verne’s route is not always excellent on account of its N. exposure.

‘ Loustalot’s, although very impressive, seems preferable. It does not appear to be very difficult. Loustalot in conversation compared the difficulties as equal to those of the S. wall below the Glacier Carré. Every ten or fifteen metres there is a little platform where one is all right. At the same time Loustalot’s great skill must not be forgotten.’

Die Alpen (the monthly issue of the S.A.C.) for August 1927 contains a very striking picture of the La Grave side of La Meije by Dr. Cav. B. Acquasanti, but I confess my inability to reconcile the topographical details.

J. P. FARRAR.

NOTE ON THE VIRO VALLEY PEAKS, CORSICA.

IN the event of any members of the Club intending to climb in Corsica during the Christmas or Easter vacations the following brief notes on the Viro valley may prove to be of interest. This is without doubt the finest mountaineering centre in the island, and as such would keep even a very active party busy for at least a month.

The Grotte des Anges (about 4500 ft.) provides sufficient shelter to enable a tent to be dispensed with. It is about $4\frac{1}{2}$ hours above Calacuccia. The surrounding scenery is magnificent and other amenities (such as bathing, fishing, plenty of firewood) are equally attractive.

The Grotte des Anges is surrounded by mountains in the form of a horseshoe—the toe pointing W. Beginning at the S. end of the horseshoe heel (Punta Scopaccia) and working round the whole chain to the Cinque Fratri at the N. extremity of the heel, I have first-hand knowledge of the following mountains :

² Mr. Raeburn’s paper, *A.J.* **33**, 215 seq.

³ *La Montagne*, 1922, p. 228.

Punta Scopiccia (1510 m.). Easy of access direct from Grotto. Affords a splendid survey of the group.

Punta Castelluccia (2231 m.). Easy from Col de Foggiale (1965 m.), passing over Point 2186 m. Descent by N.E. ridge and face affords good climbing.

Capo Tafonato (2343 m.). One of the most attractive climbs in the district. Go *via* the Col de Foggiale to the Col de Tafonato, between the latter peak and Paglia Orba. Thence in 1½ hours moderately difficult, very exposed climbing to the N. (the higher) summit. The ridge thence to the S. summit provides one hour's magnificent climbing. Descent over the S. ridge is difficult but short. Tafonato is pierced by an enormous tunnel easily gained from the foot of the S. ridge, or from the Col de Tafonato. The view down over the tremendous precipices to the W. is extraordinary.

Paglia Orba (2523 m.). The Corsican Matterhorn. Go from the Col de Tafonato by steep snow gullies, or from the Col de Foggiale by long snow slopes, involving step-cutting at one place (very difficult climbing in summer in the absence of snow). The summit ridge of the mountain carries an enormous cornice. The ascent of Paglia Orba by the N.E. face is long and exceedingly difficult.

Col de Paglia Orba lies between the latter peak and Point 2350 m. This is an enjoyable but not difficult climb from the Grotto. The descent on the Filosorma forest side is long and difficult and the rock is unreliable in places.

Points 2350, 2205, and 2170 are three bold pinnacles. They were traversed together in 1926 by two Austrian climbers, who reported the climb as being long, difficult, and very exposed, but that the rock was excellent.

Capo Ucello and Capo Tighietto (2241 m.). The former is gained in moderately easy climbing by the E. face. The ridge thence to Tighietto offers no outstanding difficulty. Descent of the latter peak *via* the N.E. ridge and E. face. A most enjoyable 10 hours day.

Col de Minuta, between Punta Minuta and Capo Tighietto. Easy from the E., but the long descent into the Filosorma valley is complicated.

Punta Minuta (2591 m.). A magnificent viewpoint. The ascent by the S.W. ridge is a difficult and fine climb. Descent by E. ridge is easy. The much be-pinnacled N.W. ridge has not been climbed.

Capo Larchia (2520 m.). Has three bold summits, only one of which has been climbed (difficult).

Monte Falo (2549 m.). Easy from almost any direction. Can be picked up on the way to the *Monte Cinto* (2780 m.), the highest of the Corsican mountains.

Monte Albano (2093 m.) and the *Cinque Fratri*. Start at the depression due E. of the lowest of the *Fratri*; thence along the ridge and over all five summits. A splendid, long and often difficult climb.

The possibilities of new routes in this district are numerous. To mention the more important outstanding problems, we have:

- (i) The individual *Cinque Fratri* summits from the S.W.
 - (ii) *Paglia Orba*, N. ridge
 - (iii) *Paglia Orba*, N.W. face
 - (iv) E. ridge of *Paglia Orba*.
 - (v) Col between *Ucello* and *Tighietto*.
 - (vi) Pass through tunnel on *Tafonato*.
 - (vii) Unclimbed pinnacles on ridge between Col de *Paglia Orba* and foot of *Paglia Orba*, N. ridge.
- } Two exceedingly tough positions.

The above list by no means exhausts the possibilities.

I hope that the above notes may prove to be of service.

G. I. FINCH.

EXHIBITION OF PICTURES AT THE ALPINE CLUB.

THE Exhibition of 1926, an unusually good one, took place during the General Strike, and, as a consequence, was not visited by the customary number of Alpine devotees. This year it was probably seen by more than the usual number of visitors, but the quality of the exhibits as a whole, we think, did not reach quite so high a standard.

Mountain scenery is admittedly a difficult subject, and particularly so when the impression of the majestic grandeur of the Alps has to be conveyed. Artists are apt to declare that they dislike painting the Alps, that the lack of atmosphere and the immense scale of the peaks defeats all efforts to bring the imagination into play. To assert that there is no atmosphere at dawn and evening or when the mountains are swathed in everchanging mists, seems to us sheer nonsense and to indicate a lamentable lack of imagination. In summer the quickly changing lights and shades, the blending of peaks and clouds, the wonderful mystery of sunrise and sunset may well escape the powers of a budding Turner; but what better material can

the ambitious artist find to work upon? Then there is the Alpine winter, when the artist can run through the whole gamut of blue and yellow. Winter scenes need careful handling, and where the effect to be reproduced is expressed in degrees of whiteness from the furthest distance to the near foreground much skill is required in the accomplishment. On the other hand, the composition of mountain pictures presents, we think, fewer difficulties; the peaks are there to inspire us, the foregrounds are many and varied and it remains but to unite them. On one thing the mountaineer insists. The peaks must be correctly drawn and no artistic licence can be allowed to interfere with the accuracy of their outlines. The mountaineer does not wish that his pictures should resemble tinted photographs, and there were examples in the Exhibition which certainly approached this undesirable state. Our Exhibition of Photographs proves to us each year that it is possible to produce pictures by mechanical means, but the two arts are quite distinct. The photographer must rely on the variations of light and shade as expressed in tones of black and white, while the artist has the inestimable advantage of having all the colours of the prism at his disposal, to say nothing of being able to arrange to his own liking such details as foregrounds.

As regards draughtsmanship, the Matterhorn in particular has suffered at the hands of artists, and we can recall many, some of them famous, who have sorely mishandled this wonderful rock, making it either too spiky or too squat and depriving it of its dignity. This can only be conveyed by a correct drawing of its outlines, of which we would cite as an example Mr. Willink's masterly picture of this great peak in winter. The Matterhorn is one of Nature's masterpieces and it is not for mere man to attempt to improve on it. Impression and design are without doubt very desirable forms of art, but they should not lead the artist into conveying wrong impressions as far as mountain form is concerned. A good example of successful impressionist treatment of a great peak was shown in the oil-painting 'The Jungfrau,' by Sir Ernest Waterlow (lent by Dr. Roger-Smith), which was a very dignified rendering of a noble subject in which no fault could be found with the drawing of the peak. In olden days, and those are no further away than the latter half of the eighteenth century, all peaks in art had a terrible tendency to spikiness, as witness the intensely interesting collection of reproductions of pictures depicting the Grands Mulets which appeared in a recent number of the *ALPINE JOURNAL*.

The oil-colours, which were few in number, reached a high standard. Mr. Arnold-Forster's study of a glacier was one of the best we can remember to have seen. The effect of the tangled séracs was well brought out without insisting on too much detail, and the subdued greyish-green tones lent an air of mystery to the whole picture. In an entirely different type of subject, Mr. Graham Petrie, in 'San Vigilio,' gave us one of the most attractive pictures in the room, a delightful example of luminous colour. Miss Phyllis Woolner sent a pretty little study of flower-decked meadows, curiously resembling MacWhirter's well-known 'Spring in Tyrol.' Miss Benecke's 'Matterhorn from the Bricolla Glacier' was a simple design, rather flat in effect. The title, we think, must be incorrect, as the Matterhorn is not visible from the Bricolla Glacier. Three contributions by Miss Marguerite Kees, painted in body colour, displayed considerable strength and might almost have been mistaken for oils. The best was 'Lago di Lunghino.' In the 'Rothhorn' we thought the reds were too violent. Mr. Cecil Hunt, another exponent of body colour, showed four very accomplished examples of his art. 'The Meije' had that wonderful depth in the shadows which seems to be a secret of Mr. Hunt's. In the 'Silvaplanasee' the blue was rather too vivid, and we think upset the balance of the picture.

It was a real pleasure to see Mr. Willink's work on our walls again. 'Etna from Taormina' was a charming impression, and the members must have been delighted to see again some of the characteristic sketches of climbing incidents, originally drawn for the Badminton 'Mountaineering.'

The work of Mr. Colin Phillip and Dr. Norman Collie was distinguished by a marked vigour of touch. Mr. Phillip's 'Sex Rouge' was very finely conceived and probably one of the best alpine pictures he has given us, which is saying a great deal. It is easy to see that Dr. Collie loves the Scottish hills. His pictures are full of feeling and brought home to us the peculiar fascination of the atmosphere and landscapes of Skye.

Mr. E. W. Powell also sought inspiration in the Scottish Highlands, which materialised in pictures of considerable power in 'The Slioch and Loch Maree' and 'An Teallach from Loch Toll-an-Lochain, Winter,' while among his Swiss subjects, all good, 'The Finsteraarhorn from Egon von Steiger Hut' was a very charming study of an alpine sunset.

Mr. Walter West sent two delightful scenes on Lake Como; one called 'Sunshine through Mist, Bellagio,' stood out by reason of its exquisite effect of sunbathed mist and its perfect technique.

Mr. Howard Somervell's pictures, mostly of the Himalayas, showed their usual marked individuality in addition to artistic talent of the highest order. They were probably, from their subjects, the most interesting works in the room.

Mr. Lawrenson gave us a peep into the Killarney hills in two characteristic renderings of the prismatic atmosphere of that enchanting district. The blue tone of 'Carrantuohill' was perhaps a little exaggerated. Mr. Fred Stratton's clever impression of night 'From Cap Ferrat' showed how much can be conveyed by very little work.

Winter alpine landscape has an irresistible attraction for the artist and presents some exceedingly difficult problems. An extraordinarily clever realisation of sunlight on winter snow, 'Looking across Lake Léman from near Les Avants,' proved that Mr. Hardwicke Lewis' talent shows no sign of waning at the advanced age of 83. Miss Emily Paterson showed two finished pieces of painting, 'In the Bernese Oberland' and 'Snowstorm, Lauterbrunnen,' although we did not like the somewhat muddy tones in the last named. Her other exhibit bore an inaccurate title, as the subject was beyond doubt the Jungfrau from the Jungfraujoch, painted from an almost similar spot to that of Sir Ernest Waterlow's oil-colour already referred to.

Mr. Edgar Wybroo in 'An Alpine Glow' secured a delightful sunset effect, while his 'Evening Gleam on the Lake of Geneva' was still more successful. In another good picture, 'An Impression of Winter in the Alps,' the shadows in the snow might have been a little more emphasised.

Mr. Lawrence Linnell has his own way of conveying his impressions and his work is always interesting. The misty atmosphere in his pictures was most seductive. Mr. Alfred Topham showed a mastery of the lighting of winter snow, but the intense blue of his skies was not very convincing. A charming little study, 'Piz de la Margna,' came from Miss F. Montgomery Norton, and from Mrs. Dixon one of the best of the winter pictures in 'Near Mürren Station.' We thought the skies were too blue in some of Miss Phyllis Pearce's winter scenes, but on the other hand the snow was very cleverly rendered and the reflected light in the shadows was handled with happiest results, especially in 'Lenzerheide after the Storm.'

The work of Colonel Donne and Mr. C. G. Blampied is always a popular feature of our exhibitions. Of the pictures by the first-named artist 'A Dolomite Sunset' was a very alluring symphony in blues and rose pinks and decidedly the best of

his exhibits, although 'The Latemar and Karersee' also attracted much admiration. Mr. Blampied was well represented by 'Mont Blanc from La Flégère' and 'The Village of Dolonne,' both very pleasing; but still better was 'The Rosengarten' (lent by Dr. Roger-Smith), which was freer from the purple tones in the shadows which is rather too marked a mannerism of this clever artist. Mr. Clement Du Pontet has a somewhat similar mannerism in his lavish use of palish blue, which seems to pervade most of his work, but his two exhibits, 'Summer in the Alps' and 'Where the Sun shines,' had great charm.

Miss Hechle is obviously a mountaineer and in complete sympathy with her subject. It has been very interesting to follow her progress, and although we may not always agree with her interpretation her technique is beyond criticism and she displays unusual virility in the treatment of her subjects. 'On the Ortler' and 'Evening' (very happily framed) were her best exhibits, but 'Séracs on the Glacier de Bionnassay' also showed the skill with which she handles ice and snow.

In Mr. Lawrence Pilkington's 'Val Verzasca in Spring' and 'A Crag' we had the unmistakable evidence of the climber who knows his mountains and how to treat them pictorially, a remark which also applies to Mr. Brant in his two small contributions 'At Val d'Isère' and 'In the Val de Rhêmes.'

Miss Pawsey showed two pleasing figure studies, both of which were perhaps a little too dark in tone, which, however, suited admirably a delightful sketch of a chalet at Winkelmatten near Zermatt.

The scenery of the lakes is, as might be expected, a favourite subject at these exhibitions. Mrs. Moore, the talented daughter of Colonel Donne, displayed in 'The Karersee' a marked sense of colour, which Mrs. Dixon also possesses, as she showed in a very clever Turner-esque drawing of Lake Thun. 'Lago Maggiore from Baveno,' by Miss Kirkpatrick, was a dainty little work, and we liked even better the unconventional treatment of 'Across Lake Thun.' Mrs. Redman's 'Spring, Lake Orta,' had captured the delicate lights of that lovely sheet of water.

One of the best of these pictures was Mr. Wybrou's 'Repose: Bachalpsee, near Grindelwald,' distinguished by a beautiful smoothness exactly suited to the subject. Mr. Wilfred Wood had an attractive little drawing, 'A Misty Day, Lake Misurina.' The work of Miss Veronica Lucas was marked by a certain originality of treatment which showed to the best advantage in 'September Afternoon, Lake Annecy,' but she does not seem

to have quite found herself, and her drawing was somewhat defective. Miss MacAndrew showed a pleasant sketch of a lake near the Simplon. Her mountain pictures were also excellent, but we think she might with advantage put more colour into her work.

Miss Rosa Wallis gave us two of her captivating studies of flower-decked alpine meadows, and the alpine flora was also prettily depicted by Miss Thomas.

Miss Helen McAlpine and Mr. Carelli showed Dolomite pictures full of characteristic colour, and some pleasing work was exhibited by Miss Ogle and Mrs. Stephens.

We should not omit to mention an exceedingly interesting chalk drawing of the Grandes Jorasses by Mr. Arnold-Forster. An example of Elijah Walton must have recalled old times to many of our senior members.

Mr. Spencer's work grows more interesting each year. His long experience of photography has made him a master of composition and he chooses his subjects with the eye of a mountaineer. The red seals that appeared on his frames during the exhibition were sufficient signs of the popularity of his work. The 'Petit Dru,' with rolling mists surrounding the peak, and 'Les Charmoz' were his most successful exhibits.

A very interesting set of beautifully executed metal plaques was sent over by Monsieur Jan Joulin of Lyons, in which silver, copper, aluminium and other metals were artistically used to represent well-known mountain scenes. These attracted much admiration and formed a striking novelty in an exhibition of paintings.

The heartiest thanks of the Club are once more due to Mr. Spencer for devoting so much time to getting together such a representative and delightful collection of pictures.

IN MEMORIAM.

COLONEL J. W. A. MICHELL.

(1840-1927.)

COLONEL MICHELL was one of the oldest members of the Alpine Club, to which he was elected, in 1882, on a purely Himalayan qualification. He had a very extensive list of exploration and mountaineering expeditions in the Himalayas, Kashmir, Yarkand, etc., in the years 1860-2, 1864-5, 1869-72, 1875 and 1877. He was

one of the last remaining officers of the old East India Company who were transferred, after the Mutiny, to the present Indian Army.

Colonel Michell served in the Bhutan war, 1865-6, the Duffla campaign of 1874-5, and the Sikkim operations of 1888. At the time of his election to the Alpine Club he was a major in the 36th Bengal N.I., and retired as a colonel in 1897.

He read a paper to the Alpine Club entitled 'Twenty Years' Climbing and Hunting in the Himalayas' ('A.J.' **11**, 203 *et seq.*), and another interesting contribution, 'Exploring in Sikkim Himalaya,' will be found in 'A.J.' **15**, 111 *et seq.*

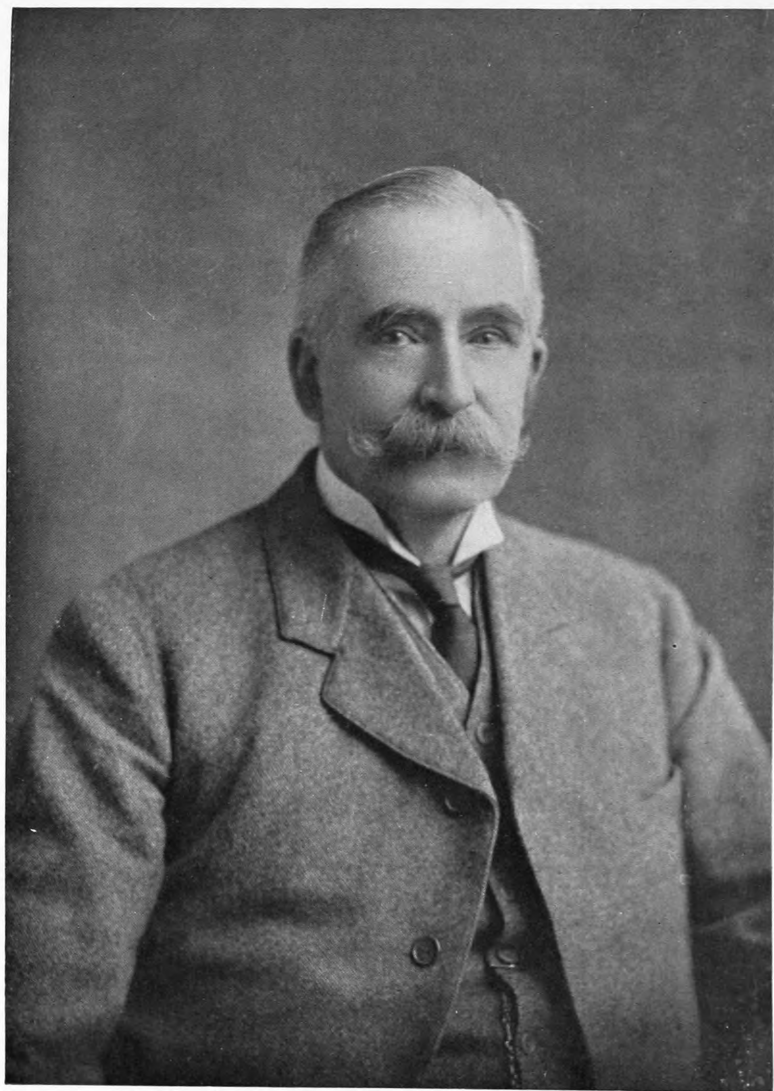
PHILIP FLETCHER.

(1847-1927.)

PHILIP FLETCHER, who died at Worplesdon, Surrey, on June 11, in his 81st year, had been for all his last years a keen member of the Alpine Club. He began climbing late in life: his first season, which included the Breithorn, Monte Rosa, and the Matterhorn, was 1889; but he kept it up for many years, and in 1906, when at the age of 60 he climbed Mont Blanc and made his third ascent of the Matterhorn, he had been up nearly all the recognised peaks of Switzerland, and was a well-known and welcome visitor at many of the climbing centres. At Arolla more especially, which he visited again and again, and where he had climbed every peak round, most of them three or four times, he was a familiar figure. He loved the place, and more than one guide there, as well as the little English Church, benefited by his liberality.

Mountaineering was perhaps the chief of his pleasures: it gave him many happy holidays and a store of memories for his old age. He enjoyed to the full the scenery and the long days in the high air and the sense of strength matched against natural obstacles which is the mountaineer's delight. He had the additional satisfaction of feeling that he could hold his own at the sport with much younger men, who admired his skill and experience and envied his powers of endurance. At the same time his generous appreciation of their activities made him a welcome companion, whether on Swiss mountains or scrambles among the rocks of Wales.

This is no place for an account of his life at home in Lancashire, where he was a member of an old-established colliery firm. But those who knew him in Switzerland will be glad to know that as he was there so he was at home, a genial and generous friend to all alike, interested in other people's doings, and expecting them to be interested in his, with a warm-hearted simplicity of character which endeared him to all sorts and conditions of men and women in the colliery village where most of his life was spent. He was a liberal benefactor of his parish and of the church which his father had built



Phot. T. Chidley.

PHILIP FLETCHER.
1847-1927.

in it, and many good causes and many individuals benefited by his generosity. Alike at home and abroad he went about doing acts of kindness; he was a man full of sympathetic human interests, with a high standard of personal conduct, a great Christian gentleman.

F. F.

H. D. MINCHINTON.

(1887-1927.)

THERE has probably been no more devoted follower of mountaineering who has worked in the Himalayas than Major H. D. Minchinton of the 1st (K.G.O.) Gurkha Rifles.

Nor do I think, considering the claims on him, and the ties of an officer serving in India, and also taking into consideration that he was a man of very little, if any, private means beyond his pay, that more could have been accomplished by anyone.

He never received outside assistance in any of his expeditions until he joined Major Mason's expedition to Shaksgam in 1926.

Minchinton was entered to mountaineering in Switzerland when quite young, and I believe had the advantage of instruction from the late Mr. C. D. Cunningham.

I do not think that he accomplished anything of special note during the few times that he visited the Alps.

But he had already acquired considerable skill in handling ordinary snow and rock problems before his arrival in India.

He was then lucky enough to be appointed to the 1st Gurkhas, whose station at Dharmsala is on the lower slopes of the great Dhaulī Dhar Ridge which divides the District of Kangra from the Chamba State.

No man with a taste for the mountains could find a more wonderful home, and from that year—1907—until the present year he spent all his spare time in exploring and climbing the mountains surrounding his own station.

But further than that, he was so placed as to be within reach of far grander country beyond the Dhaulī Dhar Range itself.

Moreover, in that regiment there is a tradition of exploration and mountaineering, and Major Minchinton received encouragement from two at least of our members belonging to it, the present General Sir Herbert Powell and Brig.-General E. D. Money, both of whom belong to the Alpine Club.

Major Money joined him in most of his earlier climbs, and between them they trained a considerable number of very useful Gurkha Riflemen.

The climbs done by parties from Dharmsala were often extremely long and trying from the point of view that they were invariably handling new ground.

The peaks on the Dhaulī Dhar Range were conquered one by one, and finally the highest point, now always known as the 'Matterhorn,' was ascended.

All this gave a mixed and varied experience, until just before the War, 1914, when Major Minchinton was enabled to take a longer leave, and pushed his explorations through Bhara Bhanghal into Lahoul and Zanskar.¹ That journey, carried out entirely with the help of his own men, is very typical of what can be done by an expedition not more highly equipped than that of an ordinary officer's shooting trip.

As will be seen by reference to his account, he made a number of very interesting climbs, and covered a great deal of very strange country.

But in that country of innumerable peaks of third-rate Himalayan importance, the points reached and the passes crossed convey very little to the ordinary reader.

There is one point in Major Minchinton's career which is worth referring to. Major Money (as he then was) was able to influence the military authorities to such an extent that a grant was given him to clothe and equip a small detachment of Gurkhas, to train and ground them in mountain work, and to teach them the use of the rope and ice-axe, and how to handle simple snow problems.

Major Minchinton at that time was Major Money's assistant.

However, this training came to an untimely end at the time of the Frontier troubles of 1908, and when normal conditions were re-established the grant was never renewed.

During the War Major Minchinton saw varied service, alike in France, Mesopotamia, Palestine, and on the Indian frontier. He was very severely wounded in the left arm at the Dujaila Redoubt on March 8, 1916, in General Aylmer's last attempt to relieve Kut, and received the Military Cross.

I do not think he ever recovered the full use of this left arm, and it was always a serious handicap to him in the mountains.

Subsequently he visited New Zealand, making some small climbs from the Hermitage. He made also an interesting journey through the hills of Tasmania.²

In 1926 he joined Major Mason as his second in command on his exploration of the Shaksgam, and it is perfectly well known that the success of the party, so far as overcoming the physical difficulties of the mountains was concerned, was due to his knowledge, keenness, and enthusiasm.

It is pleasant to think that he leaves behind him in his regiment some officers who, having profited by his example and enthusiasm, are succeeding him in keeping up the tradition to which he himself succeeded.

C. G. BRUCE.

¹ *A.J.* 28, 382-94.

² *A.J.* 37, 38-46.



H. D. MINCHINTON.
1887-1927.

[Captain J. W. Rundall, 1st (K.G.O.) Gurkha Rifles, writes from Kohima, Assam, dated June 27 :

‘ . . . I hope that you will be able to find space in your next issue for a few words “In memoriam” of a very gallant gentleman. . . . Major Minchinton was a true son of the mountains, full of the real spirit of *bonhomie* and *joie de vivre* ; nothing ever seemed to depress him, and his loss to the regiment, both as a soldier and climber, is quite irreparable. On the mountains his pace and endurance were astounding, while as a “Khud runner” he could knock spots off men half his age.

‘ He was to have joined me this summer in the Oberland, and we had made extensive plans for the exploration and climbing of the giants of Bhara Bhanghal and Lahoul in happy years to come. . . .’]

RAYMOND BICKNELL.

(1875–1927.)

RAYMOND BICKNELL was born on January 3, 1875, and was educated at Wellington College and at Christ’s College, Cambridge. After some years of land agency he entered the employment of the Newcastle Breweries, and in 1916 became a Director of that Company. Not long after leaving Cambridge he married Miss Phillis Lovibond, who shared and encouraged his enthusiasm for the mountains.

Norway first attracted him, and while still an undergraduate he had in the course of two summers climbed a number of Norwegian peaks. In 1897 he had a most successful season, during which he made the first ascent of Mjöltnir by its S.W. side (previously descended by Slingsby), the first ascent of the N. ridge of Store Midtmaradalstind (this is still known as Bicknell’s route), and one of the earliest traverses of Store Skagastolstind. Then followed ten years during which he could not climb, but in 1908, 1909, and 1911 he was back in Norway. Hitherto he had climbed with Ole Berge or any other guide whom he could pick up, but from 1908 onwards down to 1924 he climbed guideless and as leader of his party. By the end of 1911 he had acquired a knowledge of the Jotunheim which could be rivalled by few and a considerable experience of neighbouring districts. The most remarkable feat of these years, perhaps of his whole career, was the first ascent of the gully between Manden and Kjaerringen, in the course of which he was cutting steps in hard ice continuously for over nine hours.

In 1912 he went for the first time to the Alps, and he was so impressed by them and by the more complicated problems of their ascent that he never again returned to Norway. His first Alpine season was spent in the Mont Blanc district, but the weather was so bad that even the ordinary climbs presented conspicuous difficulties.

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Next year was better and he made what is believed to be the second ascent of the N. face of the Plan by M. Fontaine's route and found the N.W. ridge of the Ober-Gabelhorn in a condition that gave full play to his icemanship. From this period onwards he went more and more frequently to the Lake District, which could be reached easily from his home, and also made occasional visits to North Wales. He soon became very familiar with the difficult rock-climbing of these districts.

In the early part of the war he was over age for military service, but when the age limit was raised he at once obtained a Commission in a special service battalion of the Royal Marines. From the Armistice to 1924 every summer found him in the Alps. In these years he was at the height of his powers and climbed a large number of the great peaks of the Mont Blanc district, the Oberland, the Valais, the Dauphiné, and the Graians. The season of 1920 was particularly successful, and included a great week during which he made the third ascent of Mont Dolent from France by the Brèche de l'Amône, descended into Italy, climbed the Grandes Jorasses, and returned to France over the Col des Grandes Jorasses. But fate was soon to restrict his physical abilities. In the winter of 1924-5 he all but succumbed first to typhoid, then to appendicitis; phlebitis followed, and for a time it seemed probable that serious mountaineering would not in future be possible for him. In 1926, however, he was again in the Alps, but this time with a guide. Though still somewhat lame he traversed the High Level route and succeeded in ascending some big peaks. In 1927, again with a guide, he crossed a number of passes and peaks from Saas to the Dauphiné and found that his old powers were rapidly returning. He had been going so well that when after a month his guide had to return home he felt himself strong enough to lead his party up the S. Aiguille d'Arves. To those who have climbed with him it must be hardly credible that he can have fallen for any other reason than some sudden physical failure resulting from his illnesses of 1925.

He was elected to the Alpine Club in 1911, before he had ever been to the Alps. From 1920 to 1923 he was a member of the Committee, where his services were of great value, and in 1926 the Club elected him to the Vice-Presidency. In addition to occasional notes he contributed to the *ALPINE JOURNAL* two papers on Norway, entitled 'Two Norwegian Couloirs' (vol. 25), and 'The Horunger' (vol. 34), which every climber contemplating a first visit to Norway should read, and three papers on his Alpine experiences, 'The North-West Ridge of the Ober-Gabelhorn' (vol. 28), 'Mont Dolent and the Col des Grandes Jorasses' (vol. 33), and 'The Jungfrau from the Wengern Alp, Schalligrat, and other climbs in 1923' (vol. 36).

Mountaineering was the dominating passion of his life. When possible he would undertake long and arduous expeditions, the achievement of which would call for the exercise of his full powers.



RAYMOND BICKNELL.



R. B.

J. N.

A FEW HOURS BEFORE THE ACCIDENT.
(S. and Central Aiguilles d'Arves in background.)

When these were impracticable he would climb lesser mountains or preferably cross easy cols, for he never liked to tie himself to one centre. When conditions were too bad even for these he would walk over grass passes in rain or snow. When he could not get to the Alps he would go to the Lakes or North Wales. For single days he would go to the Northumbrian hills and moors. No one has more ardently sought the delight of the hard-won ascent, but to him the mountains were not a mere glorified gymnasium. In bad weather as in good he loved their form and colour, the slowly changing perspectives of the long hill walk as well as the near detail of clean-cut slab or delicately moulded snow.

He was in every sense a great mountaineer. Before each season he would plan carefully the climbs he proposed to make and familiarize himself with their history (it was indeed for this purpose that he compiled the index to the later volumes of the *ALPINE JOURNAL* which is shortly to be utilized by the Club). He was a born leader, and in the general plan of campaign as well as in the actual working out of each ascent his friends always followed him readily—even when his arrangements involved such inconveniences as a bivouac without special equipment on the Schallijoch or the ascent of a 4000 metre peak as a training climb. The efficiency which brought him such success in his career was noticeable in his management of the details of the night in the hut and of the early morning start. He had the temperament and the skill of the great master of mountain craft. While his massive build militated against his being in quite the first rank of rock-climbers, there can have been few amateurs who were his equals on ice or as all-round mountaineers. No one who has ever seen it can forget the sight of his purposeful back as with the short pick of his antiquated axe he would cut his way up some formidable ice-slope, or the resourceful caution with which in storm and gathering darkness he would steer his party into safety. The hard common sense which was such a conspicuous feature of his character enabled him to weigh chances and risks in a just balance, and often to snatch a victory where others might have been deterred by apparent rather than real difficulty or by the loudly announced sentiments of their predecessors. For such laurels as fall to the mountaineer he had nothing but contempt, especially when those laurels were earned by expeditions where the dangers were outside the climber's control, or, to use his own words, by 'those mistakes which it has now become the fashion to classify as variations' on great routes.

But beyond this Raymond Bicknell was an original and dominating personality, at once masterful and lovable. He had supreme qualities, a courage to think out his own opinions and to abide by them, combined with human kindliness and utter loyalty. He possessed a unique type of humour which he sometimes employed with devastating effect against pretension or sham or slackness of thought. There was a bigness about him—physical, mental,

spiritual—so much so that he seemed to many of us to be almost a permanent part of the universe. Whatever he did he did with his might, whether it were the climbing of a mountain, or the study and photography of medieval architecture, or the organization of a week-end camp with his family on the Cheviot, or even the driving of a motor-car.

Mountaineering no longer stands in need of defence or justification. We know that its risks are small, infinitesimal when compared with the reward it offers. But now here, now there, the great mountains exact their price. In Raymond Bicknell we recognize the essential good, developed year after year by the toil, the struggle, the danger, the beauty of the hills. The foreknowledge that from him some day the price was to be exacted would, we believe, have caused him no hesitation, have drawn from him no complaint. To us remain the memory and the regret.

C. A. E.

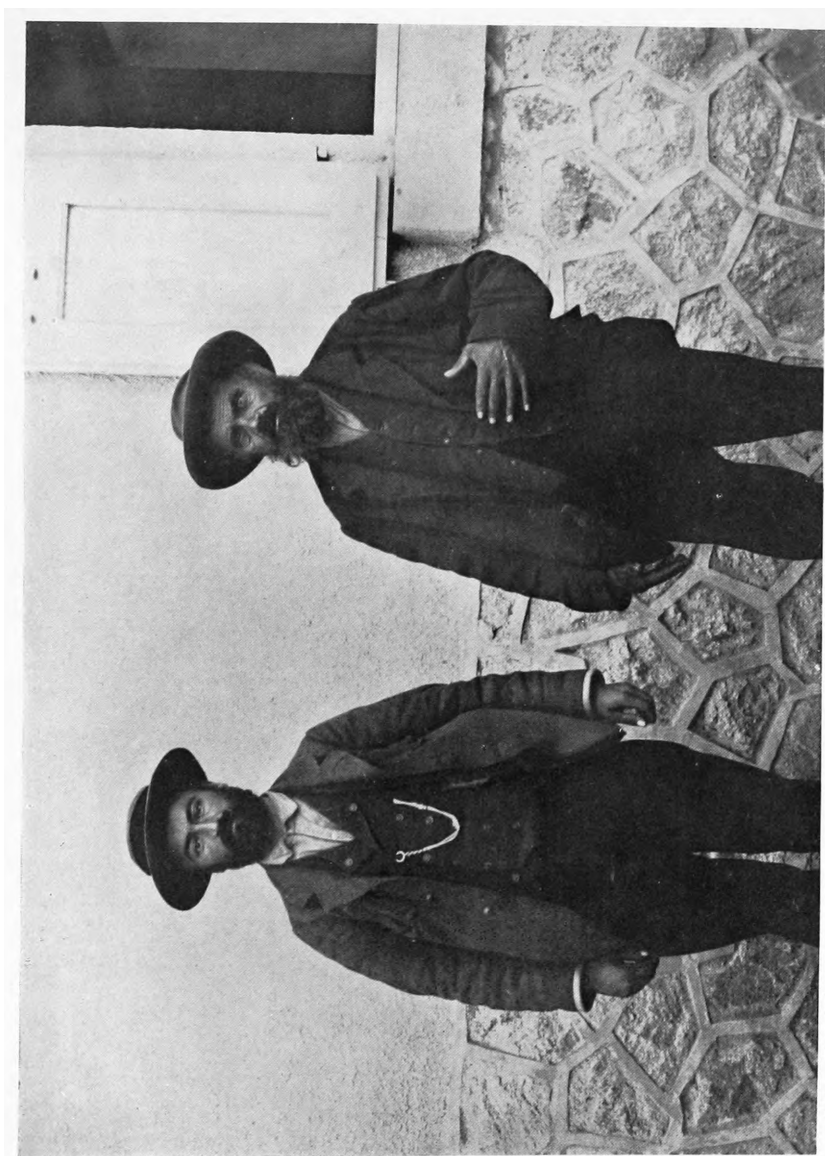
PHILIP SCOTT MINOR.

(1861–1927.)

LIKE many other Northern members, Philip Scott Minor seldom, if ever, attended a club meeting with the exception of the Annual Dinner, so that, although elected sixteen years ago, he was probably almost unknown to the majority of members of the Alpine Club. But amongst the mountaineering fraternity in the North of England no man was better known nor more liked than he. He was a general favourite. It was not that he ever did any heroic climb, he was content with the ordinary 'difficult' gullies of the Moss Ghyll type for preference. Nor did he rank with his fellow-townsmen, Woolley and Pilkington, as an explorer, but he was a most enthusiastic lover of the mountains and one of the most companionable men who ever walked.

He was probably the most popular man in the Rucksack Club, his sociableness and his never-failing enthusiasm contributed greatly to that club's success, and he carried the same characteristics into the Fell and Rock Club. In 1918–19 he had the satisfaction of being President of both these clubs at the same time.

He was always a great fell walker and had acquired an intimate knowledge of the Welsh and Cumberland hills. He did not begin rock-climbing till he was turned forty, and climbed in Switzerland for the first time (except for a 'tourist' ascent of the Wetterhorn) in 1906. On that occasion, *inter alia*, he traversed Mt. Blanc with two amateurs and a porter. His best season was in 1911, when in a fortnight of good weather he climbed Lo Besso, Zinal-Rothhorn, Ober Gabelhorn, Matterhorn, Monte Rosa, the Dent Blanche, and just missed the Dom through a storm. In that year, his fifty-first, he was elected to the Alpine Club.



Phot. Alfred Holmes.

MAXIMIN AND PIERRE GASPARD, PÈRE.
(About 1890.)

Of full height and heavily built, he was somewhat slow in walking, and used to say that when at a height of over 10,000 ft. it required a microscope to see him move. But he always 'got there' sooner or later, and it was always a joy to be in his company. In climbing he was steady and absolutely reliable, especially in descending steep rock.

After the War he visited the French Alps two or three times, contenting himself with the smaller peaks, but he continued to visit our own hills at every opportunity, and raised his total number of ascents of Snowdon to about 120, including three ascents in one day at the age of fifty-seven.

It may be mentioned that he held the degree of LL.B. (London University). He had to wait for his final examination some time because he was too young, and in due course he passed first in all England.

H. E. S.

MAXIMIN GASPARD.

(1864-1927.)

Few of us who have seen this famous guide in recent years would have recognized in that paralysed form the once picturesque and athletic figure, the dominant personality and 'splendid swagger' so characteristic of Maximin, second son of Pierre Gaspard. For, in the heyday of his renown, some 30 years ago, he stood in Dauphiné in a class almost by himself. His one possible rival, often his companion, was his cousin, the still active Joseph Turc, 'le Zouave.'

If, at that date, practically all the great Dauphiné peaks had been conquered, still, the early nineties were the epoch when climbers began to seek out the most difficult routes, and in that pursuit Maximin became pre-eminent. He was the leader of some of the most adventurous mountaineers of the period, of whom the best known are MM. C. Verne, A. Reynier, Eugène Gravelotte, and our own members, Messrs. F. E. L. Swan and Alfred Holmes.

The following is a list of some of Maximin's most important first ascents or new routes :—

Pic du Glacier Carré

¹ La Meije (by the W. arête and N.W. face ; from the N.)

Brèche Joseph Turc

Brèche Maximin Gaspard

Grande Ruine (W. arête)

Pic Bourcet (N.E. summit)

Roche Méane (Tête Carrée)

¹ Les Écrins (from the Glacier Noir)

¹ According to my friend Monsieur Lory, Maximin had made 60 ascents of La Meije and Les Écrins, respectively.

Mont Pelvoux (from the N.W., Glacier Noir)
 Le Coup de Sabre
 Col du Glacier Noir
 Les Bans (from the S. ; from the W., or Valgaudemar)
 Vaxivier
 Les Rouies (from the S.)
 Pic d'Olan (N. summit, from the S.)
 Pic des Souffles (first ascent of all three summits)

while, outside Dauphiné, his greatest exploit was probably the first traverse of the dangerously rotten arête connecting the Grande Casse with the Grande Motte. This expedition, like many others included in the list above, has never been repeated.

Maximin was above all a 'Dauphiné' guide; he never left it willingly, and, it must be confessed, was never as great a leader when away from his own mountains.

As a rock climber he was brilliant in the extreme as well as absolutely safe. On ice and snow, like most Dauphiné guides, he was little more than mediocre. As a pathfinder or discoverer of routes he has seldom been surpassed. The writer will always remember his graceful and rapid execution of any rock problem, and no cragsman was ever more finished in his movements. His younger brother, Dévouassoud, carries on the family traditions.

Like all of us, Maximin had his faults. A born leader of men and expeditions, completely fearless, he was often overbearing in manner and reckless in execution. Success was only too apt to carry him off his feet. Still, with many virtues, one could easily forgive what were almost *les défauts de ses qualités*.

He died at St. Christophe on June 5 last. Death, after such prolonged suffering, must have come as a relief.

The name of Maximin Gaspard will live. The Glacier Noir's incomparable *cirque*, grandest and grimmest scene of the whole range of the Alps, will, ages hence, bear testimony to his deeds.

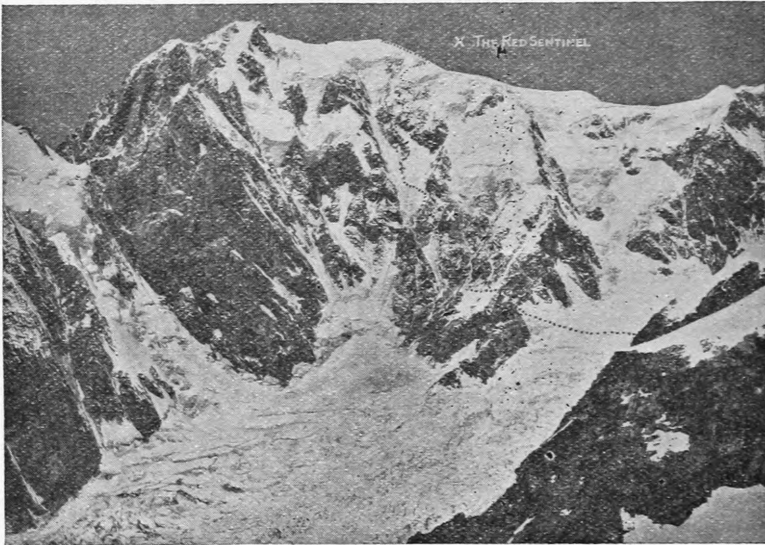
E. L. S.

NEW EXPEDITIONS.

Mont Blanc Group.

MONT BLANC, 4810 m. = 15,782 ft., B.I.K., FIRST ASCENT DIRECT FROM THE BRENVIA GLACIER. September 1-2, 1927. Messrs. F. S. Smythe and T. Graham Brown. Left Torino hut 03.30 *en route* to Col du Trident and Upper Brenva Glacier. It was decided on account of soft snow on Glacier du Géant to postpone the ascent for 24 hrs. and ascend the Tour Ronde, whence it is possible to see the lower part of the face, which is invisible from the Torino hut. Ascended from Géant Glacier to E. Col de Toule and traversed

frontier ridge to first prominent point of Aiguille d'Entrèves. Descended to Glacier du Géant and ascended steep slopes to E. arête of Tour Ronde. From this point the lower part of the climb was examined and a decision made to press on owing to good snow on southerly slopes. Traversed horizontally across steep S. face of Tour Ronde, thereby saving possibly 2 hrs. Traversed arête to Col Ouest de la Tour Ronde and descended to Brenva Glacier. Climbed short steep slope to the little col at the foot of the Brenva arête (Moore's arête), for which the name *Col Moore* is suggested. Ascended a sharp steep snow arête to broken rocks below the first



BRENVA FACE OF MT. BLANC.
Showing Mr. Smythe's route.

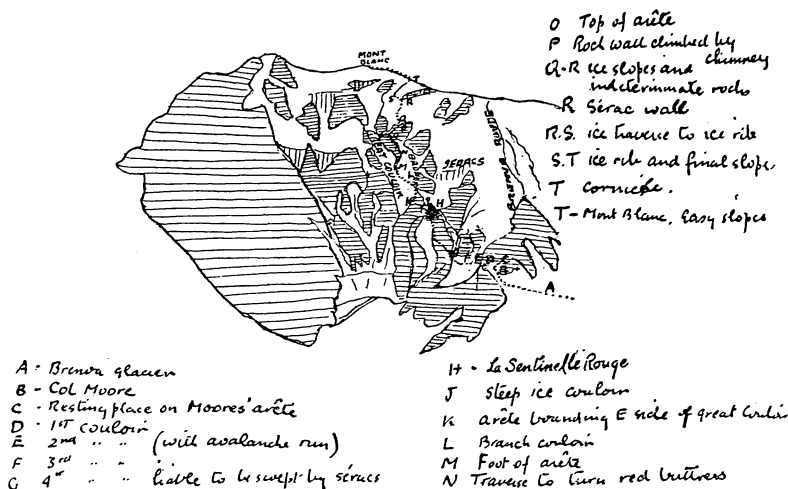
great step on Moore's arête (14.00). From the Tour Ronde a prominent red buttress with a perpendicular face had been observed on the face of the mountain. The base of this buttress, for which the name *La Sentinelle Rouge* is suggested, seemed to give promise of the most secure bivouac place on the Brenva face and was made the objective of the first day's climb.

Waited on Moore's arête until sun was off the face; stones had ceased falling and snow safely crusted. Left at 16.53 and commenced traverse across the face. Crossed four couloirs over good snow—a deep ice avalanche run was crossed in the middle of the second couloir. The last couloir, which is liable to be swept by séracs, was crossed at 18.25 in a few seconds to sheltering rocks, where a short halt was made. An upward climb over steep ice and snow sprinkled with rocks

led to the base of the 'Red Sentinel' at 19.10. This place was found to form an ideal and safe bivouac site. The altitude is estimated to lie between 3600 and 3700 metres. A bitterly cold but fine night was passed, and climbing recommenced at 05.30 in perfect weather. After ascending under W. side of the 'Red Sentinel,' a steep ice couloir was crossed to the ridge bounding the E. side of the huge couloir which cleaves the face. *Descended* from this ridge to the couloir and climbed very steep snow and ice under the W. side of the ridge until almost level with the foot of a ridge, which splits the couloir into two branches. Crossed the right-hand (E.) branch over an avalanche groove to the ridge. Ascended steep ice, snow, and scattered rocks to the foot of the steep red buttress, at which the ridge becomes very definite (07.10).

A party which has once reached this point is safe from falling stones and ice for the remainder of the climb. During the two days on the face not more than half a dozen small stones were observed to fall, and at night one ice avalanche passed to the E. of the 'Red Sentinel.' Halted and left at 08.10. Turned the red buttress on difficult rocks to the right. Steep ice led back to the crest of the ridge, the snow and rocks of which were followed until the line of ascent was again forced to the right over a nasty traverse on very steep ice. Again ice and snow led back to the ridge, which could be followed on good rock to the top of the ridge (10.30). Built a small cairn and rested 45 mins. (altitude about 4200 m.). The ridge ends in a snow and ice crest, which separates the top of the branch couloir from a small couloir falling into the main couloir. This crest abuts against a steep cliff, which was forced by a slanting chimney. The upper ice and rock slopes were reached above this cliff. The ice was covered by slushy snow, and was found to be of exceptional hardness—similar to that on the top of the Brenva. A way was threaded up indeterminate slabs by a series of ascending traverses to the right and left on this ice. The line of ascent was forced to the right until almost beneath the final great sérac wall. The final rocks were reached just under the S.W. end of this wall, where it is comparatively low and changes direction round a shoulder, to run directly towards the summit of Mont Blanc above the head of the great couloir. Traversed very steep ice to the left to a rounded and ill-defined ice rib. This ice rib runs directly up the final ice slope to the left of the sérac wall. Fortunately 2-3 ins. of frozen snow were found on the N.E. side of the ice rib, which gave just sufficient purchase to crampons and thus obviated the several hours' cutting that had seemed in prospect. Ascended this rib until the sérac wall could be easily turned. Easier slopes led to an incipient corniche crossed at 15.30, about 400-500 ft. below the summit of Mont Blanc. The summit of Mont Blanc was reached without further difficulty at 16.15, and the Vallot hut at 17.30, where the night was spent. Descended next day *via* the Aiguille du Goûter and Tête Rousse.

The climb is of varied and exceptional interest throughout. The scenery, especially the near views of the Brenva face of Mont Blanc de Courmayeur, the Pétérét ridge, and the great couloir are of the grandest character. The standard of difficulty is continuously high and the angle averages about 50° for this face, while much of the upper part is steeper. The rock throughout is of the finest quality, a grey-red granite, and this accounts for the few falling stones. The ice-swept couloirs on either side of the 'Red Sentinel' are exposed, but the traverse is perfectly justifiable if taken early or late in the day. Late in the season the séracs appear to be remarkably safe, and only one ice avalanche occurred. Crampons (we



wore 'Eckenstein,' 10 point) appear to be absolutely essential to speed and consequent safety. The keys to the climb are the little 'Col Moore' and the secure bivouac place beneath the 'Red Sentinel.' As the latter dominates the lower part of the climb and makes it a possible and safe one, we propose to name the expedition *Route de la Sentinelle*.

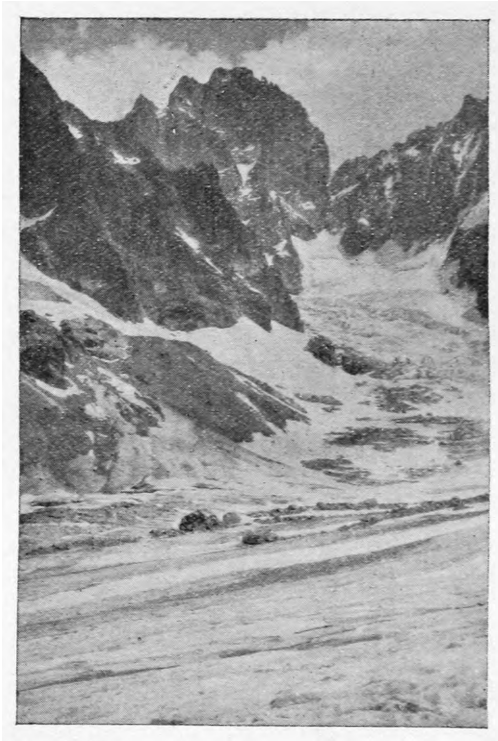
LES COURTES, 3855 m. = 12,641 ft., B.I.K., FROM THE S. (GLACIER DE TALÈFRE). September 10, 1927. Messrs. F. S. Smythe and T. Graham Brown. Delayed in leaving Couvercle hut owing to bad weather early. Left hut 05.50, a pause for breakfast being made before reaching glacier. Ascended Glacier de Talèfre to foot of buttress leading to summit ridge of Les Courtes a little to the E. of the summit, and between it and the Aiguille Croulante. Turned the steep and glaciated rocks at the foot of the buttress on the E. by ascending the couloir on that side to a short distance below the

bergschrand, and then climbing a steep, narrow chimney followed by a short wall marked by a rock flake to the crest of the buttress, near the summit of a conspicuous scree slope. Thence the buttress was climbed throughout as much as possible on the right towards the couloir on the E.; 200-300 ft. of easy rock led to the foot of a curious bent crack, avoidable, if necessary, on the left; 1000 ft. of easy scrambling led towards the foot of a conspicuous tower, about 100 ft. below which the buttress constricted to a narrow and difficult ridge. Good climbing on firm rock led to the base of the tower, which was turned to the W. over snow-masked slabs. The arête was gained above the tower, and was followed over broken rock and soft new snow without difficulty to the summit ridge, which it joins about 15 ft. below the summit of the mountain. Summit at 14.30. Descended *via* Col de la Tour des Courtes over very bad snow to the Couvercle hut and the Montanvers, 22.15.

AIGUILLE DE LESCHAUX, 3770 m. = 12,365 ft., B.I.K., BY THE N.W. FACE. August 3, 1927. Mr. R. Ogier Ward, with Joseph Georges, *le Skieur*. Leaving the Couvercle at 02.40, the party traversed the Glacier de Taléfre to the Pierre à Béranger, then up the Glacier de Leschaux, bearing left into the basin below the Peak. This last part of the glacier could only be passed by bearing well to the left, close to the rocks of the Aiguille de l'Éboulement, thence across the glacier to the rocks of that arête, represented on the B.I.K. map as descending from near Pt. 3517 m., reaching some rocks a little to the N. of the bottom of this arête at 06.30, thence across snow to the arête, and following this, sometimes on the crest, but chiefly on its S. slope, we presently reached a point below and to the right of the snow, which forms a noticeable inverted triangular patch, when the mountain is viewed from any point to its W. To this snow patch a large couloir descends; it lies behind the main arête which I have mentioned, and cuts it off from the very perpendicular W. face of the mountain. It is only possible to see into this couloir from the Grandes or Petites Jorasses. It is of considerable depth and width, but stones do not appear often to fall down it, probably because the quality of the rocks of the mountain is similar to that of the Grépon, and loose stones are very few.

We crossed below the snow patch on to the true right bank of the couloir, then up a little chimney level with the middle of the snow, and were now climbing along the inside or S. wall of the main arête; *i.e.* we were in the couloir, fairly high up on its true right bank, a little below the crest of the arête. We continued up this for about 50 mins., and at 10.00 reached the point where the arête ends by joining the face of the mountain at the top of the couloir. At this point the climb extends up the face of the mountain; this was difficult, the rocks being steep and slabby; by this in about 1 hr. we arrived at a very narrow, almost horizontal ridge of rocks, which runs S.E. and forms the last step which can be seen from the W.

to meet the main mass of the mountain at a point where the final vertical cliff descending from the summit joins a long chimney which passes almost vertically for some distance down the steep W. face; after climbing along this ridge we were able to traverse to the right until we were on the W. face of the mountain, just below the summit, and then ascend without much difficulty, reaching the top at 13.30. The rocks of this last step were also difficult.



N.W. FACE OF AIGUILLE DE LESCHAUX.

We left the summit at 14.00, and descended by the ordinary route to the Glacier de Frébouzie until 15.20, keeping close below the cliffs of the Petites Jorasses. We then mounted the glacier to the summit of the Col des Hirondelles, arriving there at 17.15.

We began the descent from the col at 17.35, and found it difficult and dangerous, the rocks being of a very poor quality, so that great care was necessary to avoid dislodging stones. There was also some risk from stones falling down the couloirs between the rock ribs. We crossed the bergschrund at the foot of these at 20.00, and reached Montenvers at 23.10.

While climbing high up on the face of the mountain about $\frac{1}{2}$ hr. below the final step, we found a piton, and above this recent axe-marks in several clefts in the rocks, and a cairn on the final step itself. These, we heard afterwards, were made by an Italian party some days before, who appear to have made the first ascent or descent of the mountain from Italy *via* the Col de Leschaux, probably by the N. arête, and to have been forced on to this face by the difficulties of the arête itself, which must be considerable. We found their descending tracks in the snow, leading down from the summit to the Glacier de Frébouzie. There were no tracks, old or recent, on our route below the piton, either on the rocks, except for about 50 ft. beneath it, or on the névé of the Glacier de Leschaux; it seems that near the position of the piton the two routes converge, and this is about $1\frac{1}{2}$ hr. below the summit.

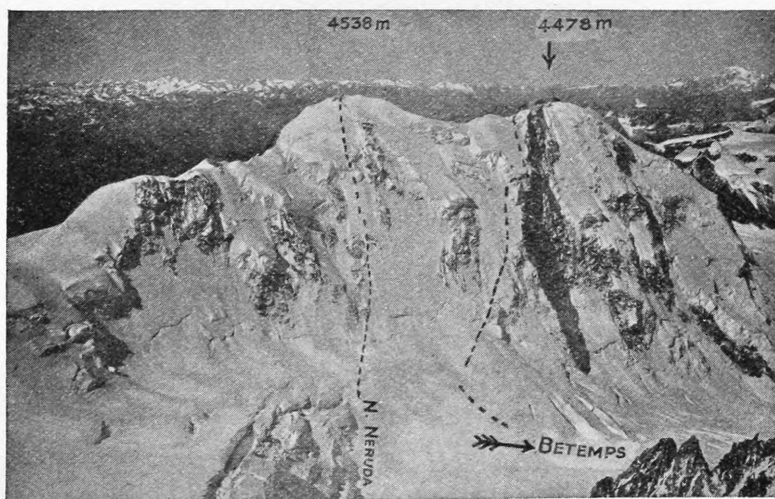
It should be noted that the N. slope of the arête leading E. from the summit of the A. de Leschaux, towards Monte Gruetta, is extraordinarily steep above the Triolet Glacier, far steeper than the map suggests.

The climb is a very fine one, the rock as good as that of the Grépon, and in many places exceedingly steep. Joseph Georges put it as intermediate in difficulty between the traverse of the Grépon and Grands Charmoz.

R. O. W.

Pennine Alps.

LYSKAMM W. SUMMIT, 4478 m. = 14,690 ft., BY THE N.E. FACE. August 5, 1927. Monsieur E. R. Blanchet, with Kaspar Mooser and Josef Aufdenblatten. The height of the face is more than 3000 ft.,



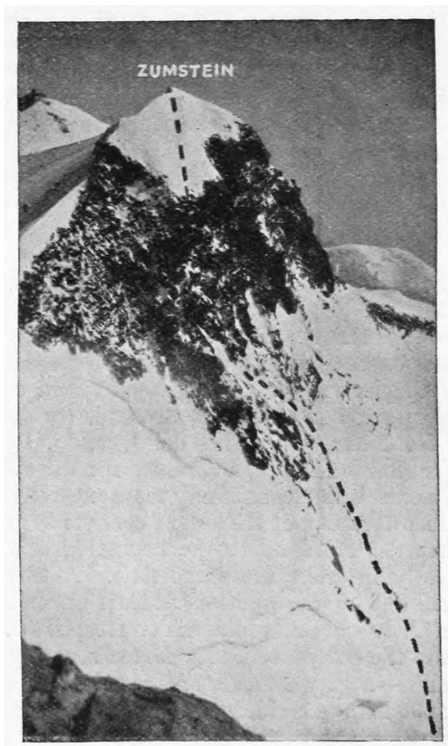
N.E. FACE OF LYSKAMM.

Right-hand route is M. Blanchet's.

set at an average angle of 55° . No rocks were touched throughout. Two easy bergschrunds were crossed low down. At a height of about two-thirds of the slope a traverse was made to the right (W.), in order to cross a bad heart-shaped outcrop of séracs. This traverse, which was only about 100 ft. long, took 1 hr. Higher up the angle eases off to 30° , but steepens again after a long oblique crevasse—easily crossed. The watershed was attained some $\frac{1}{4}$ hr. from the summit. The conditions were so good that no step-cutting was necessary except on the traverse. Times: base of face, 06.25; watershed, 11.35; summit, 11.50.

[This appears to be the first time that any part of the main N.E. face has been touched since the late Mr. Norman Neruda's ascent of the E. summit with Christian Klucker and the late Josef Reinstadler, August 9, 1890, 'A.J.' 15, 307, 441.]

ZUMSTEINSPITZE, 4573 m. = 15,004 ft., BY THE W. FACE. August 30, 1927. Same party. Height of face, 1000–1100 ft.;



W. FACE OF ZUMSTEIN.
Showing M. Blanchet's route.

very steep—in fact, steeper than N.E. face of Lyskamm. Base was all ice, the second half rocky and with a kind of spherical ice-cap just below the summit. The bergschrund at the base was attained at 07.30, commencement of the rocks 10.50, summit 12.20. First 2 hrs. gave very arduous step-cutting, followed by vertical and insecure rocks. A crevice in these rocks, at first difficult, then easy, was scaled, followed by easy snow on the final cone. Ascent very dangerous from falling stones.

[This route is quite different from Route '2' in *Alpes Valaisannes*, iii., p. 94, where a serious error in the translation of an article in 'R. M.' has been made. The entire question will be thrashed out shortly in *Die Alpen*.—E. R. B.]

Bernina (W. Wing) Group.

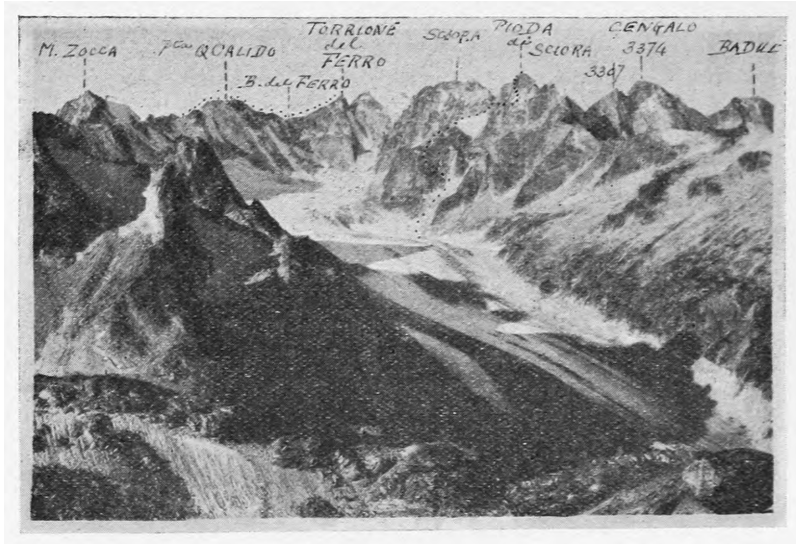
PUNTA PIODA DI SCIORA, 3238 m. = 10,624 ft., *S. map*.¹ July 3, 1927. Herr H. Rütter, with Chr. Klucker, made the first ascent of this peak *via* the N. slope of the E. arête, and by the latter to the ordinary traverse of the E. face. The broad snow couloir leading up to the arête, between Punta Pioda and Sciora di fuori (danger from falling stones!), was mounted to the lower of two névé ledges which traverse the N. slope of the E. arête diagonally upwards from N. to S. The E. arête was gained over steep névé and snow-covered slabs, and followed to the ordinary route. Much snow on the rocks made very careful going necessary.

This, the direct route from the Albigna glacier, is very interesting and of moderate difficulty. Some danger from falling stones in the lower part of the ascent.

TORRIONE DEL FERRO, 3234 m. = 10,611 ft., *S. map*,¹ BY THE E. ARÊTE. July 5, 1927. Herr H. Rütter, with Chr. Klucker, made the first ascent by the E. arête of this imposing rock tower, which is situated on the Swiss-Italian frontier, in the S.W. corner of the Albigna Glacier valley. The party reached the Bocchetto del Ferro, the deep gap between Ferro Orientale [or Punta Qualido] and Torrione del Ferro, *via* Colle del Qualido, Passo Qualido Nord, and W. summit of Ferro Orientale, the direct ascent from the Albigna Glacier being considered too dangerous from falling stones. The chief difficulty of the ascent consists in getting up out of the Bocchetto del Ferro on to the beginning of the E. arête. The rocks directly in front are impossible. A traverse on the Albigna side was out of the question, at least under obtaining circumstances; small insecure snow patches on steep slabs. Remained the S. side, where the party eventually forced a passage up smooth perpendicular cliffs—a very difficult and exposed climb, which was effected *without* the help of artificial means (pitons).

¹ These heights are taken from the *new* Siegfried map, sheet 523, 'Castasegna,' 1927.

The great obstacle of the gap once overcome, the rest was plain sailing. The party traversed the snow-covered ledges directly under the arête. There was much snow at a very steep angle, in some places nearly perpendicular, the whole traverse very exposed through-



ALBIGNA GLACIER.

Showing Herr Rütter's 1927 routes.

out. At 14.45 the summit was attained, $11\frac{1}{2}$ hrs. after leaving the Albigna hut.

The party returned by the same route, and reached the Albigna hut at 23.00.

'Kletterschuhe' would facilitate considerably; the snow prevented their being used.

H. RÜTTER.

Drakensberg, Natal.

ASCENT OF POINT ON MAIN DRAKENSBERG RIDGE (c. 10,500 ft.), N. OF CHAMPAGNE CASTLE. July 15, 1927. Messrs. G. F. Travers-Jackson and O. K. Williamson. Party left a camp close to the stream in the Hlwazeni Valley, about 10 mins. below that used for the attempt on Cathkin Peak, at 07.10. They ascended to a very well-defined gap in the main Drakensberg ridge, in a direction rather S. of W. from the camp. It is understood that this gap is the one which is crossed to the Basutoland plateau in the ascents of Champagne Castle and is called Grey's Pass. To reach the gap they traversed slopes on the true right of the gully leading up to it,

so as to avoid a waterfall, and only ascended the upper 300 ft. or so of the gully itself. The gap was reached in $4\frac{1}{2}$ hrs., excluding halts, from the camp. It is adorned by a well-marked cairn. After traversing the gentle Basutoland slopes on the other side and ascending Champagne Castle, the gap was again reached at 16.52. The peak, which rises immediately on the N. side of the gap to a height of perhaps 200 ft. above it, was now climbed by grass and loose rocks on its W. side, a final easy rocky wall about 20 ft. in height leading the climbers to the summit at 17.00. A cairn was erected. It appears to be about the same height as Cathkin Peak. A very grand view was afforded of Cathkin Peak, Monk's Cowl, and the peak on the S. side of the gap from which the party had ascended. Descending the same way to the gap, the morning's route of ascent was approximately followed, camp being regained by aid of the fitful light of the moon at about 20.40. From the opposite side of the Hlwazeni valley, and from the camp, the peak appears as a well-defined more or less rectangular rocky mass, and the ridge running northwards from it appears gradually to fall in height. The climbers propose for it the name of *Bastion peak*.

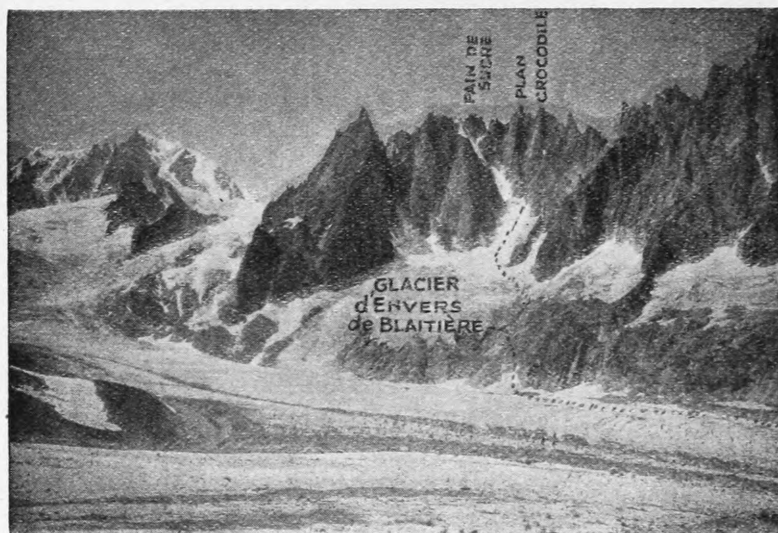
VARIOUS EXPEDITIONS.

Mont Blanc Group.

AIGUILLE DU PLAN, 3673 m. = 12,051 ft., B.I.K., SECOND ASCENT BY E. FACE (Ryan's route). July 24-25, 1927. Messrs. F. S. Smythe and J. H. B. Bell. This ascent was first made by Captain V. J. E. Ryan, with Franz and Joseph Lochmatter, in June 1906. No description has hitherto been published, but Franz Lochmatter states that he considers this route to be the finest in the Aiguilles.

Left Montenvers at 02.30. Ascended ice-fall of Glacier d'envers de Blaitière mainly by the broken, easy rocks on its N. side. Easy snow slopes led to three large schrunds which traverse the upper bay of the glacier at the foot of the great couloir dropping from the Col du Pain de Sucre. The lower two offered no difficulty, but the upper and true bergschrund was turned with difficulty under the rocks on the right. An ice traverse led to the foot of the couloir falling between the Plan and the Dent du Crocodile. Ryan's party gained the great buttress falling from the summit of the Plan low down near the foot of this couloir, but the present party found this impossible owing to icy rocks, and were forced to continue up the couloir, which was climbed with great difficulty over snow and ice-covered slabs for a considerable distance, keeping as far as possible on the left to avoid falling stones and ice. Above these slabs steep ice led to shelter beneath a conspicuous overhanging rock face beneath the buttress of the Plan. Rested and had a meal. Owing

to the icy rocks on this the sunless side of the buttress, it was still not possible to gain its crest, and the party was forced to cut directly up the long ice slope which slants up from the couloir to the crest of the buttress, which it joins at about half its height. Five hours of exacting cutting on ice of the hardest quality covered with powdery snow, and so steep as often to necessitate handholds, brought the party to the crest of the buttress at approximately 15.00 hrs. The rocks of the buttress, which often more nearly resemble a narrow rib, are severe throughout. In one exceptionally severe 80-ft. holdless crack the leader lost his axe. The rock is wonder-



A. DU PLAN, SHOWING MR. SMYTHE'S ROUTE.

fully sound, and the climbing consists almost entirely of clean-cut cracks with little hold between smooth granite slabs. Bivouacked at 18.00 on the only suitable ledge seen on the climb at a point approximately 800 ft. from the summit. Perfect weather and a comfortable night in a Zdarsky tent sack. Left at 07.00 in a warm sun, and commenced climbing the series of cracks. Unstable snow edges were sometimes present on the crest, and considerable time was lost in flogging these away before advance could be made. An 100 ft. final step was turned by a traverse across slabs to the left, and a most difficult thin crack in which it was just possible to insert the fingers and which the leader only found possible in bare feet. The final 80-ft. chimney was filled with ice, but a crack in its right wall offered the solution. An unexpected and delightful traverse to the left from the upper chock-stone in this chimney led to easy rocks

and the summit at 15.00 hrs. Descent was made by the ordinary route to the Montenvers.

There is no doubt that bad conditions added greatly to the difficulty of this climb, but the rock climbing and ice work were of the most continuously exacting standard the party had ever experienced. Captain Ryan's route over the lower portion of the climb is to be preferred to the present party's, as the Plan-Crocodile couloir is exceedingly dangerous from falling stones, corniches, and ice. The lower rocks of the arête offer, according to Franz Lochmatter, extreme difficulties, and it was only by standing on each other's shoulders and making a human ladder that Captain Ryan's party were able to climb one step. To those who know the climbing ability of the Lochmatter brothers this will no doubt speak for itself !

AIGUILLE BLANCHE DE PÉTÉRET, 4109 m. = 13,482 ft., B.I.K. Aug. 10-11, 1927. Messrs. F. S. Smythe and G. Graham Macphee. Left Courmayeur 08.45 in good weather. Arrived Gamba hut, 13.30. Left hut, 17.15. Col de l'Innominata, 18.35. Crossed intricate ice-fall of Fresnay Glacier to foot of couloir falling from 'Col des Dames Anglaises,' 20.15. The large bergschrund turned on left and couloir gained by a traverse above the bergschrund. Using Eckenstein crampons, climbed the hard and sometimes icy snow of the couloir to within 150 ft. of the col, where it is necessary to leave the couloir and traverse across the W. face of the Aiguille Blanche. Rocks very loose. Climbing by brilliant moonlight continued by a series of upward zigzag traverses on difficult rocks. At 02.00 moonlight failed. Bivouacked on a ridge connecting an outstanding pinnacle with the main W. face. Left at 05.30. Struck main S. arête too high and had to descend some way on the E. face in order to turn Grand Gendarme. Kept as high as possible to avoid falling stones, which constantly raked E. face. Considerable difficulty experienced in crossing a narrow, deeply cut ice-filled couloir. Weather meanwhile was rapidly changing for the worse, but decided to go on to Col de Pétéret rather than risk the long, difficult, and dangerous return *via* the Col des Dames Anglaises. Summit of Aiguille Blanche in bad weather at 13.00 hrs. Descended in storm to Col de Pétéret, 15.00. A hurricane was then blowing on Mont Blanc and a *tourmente* on the Col de Pétéret. Descended to Fresnay Glacier by the great rocky bastion, roping down several times on the smooth and difficult rocks. Danger was occasioned by stones blown off the rocks above by the hurricane. Descended Fresnay Glacier directly to Col de l'Innominata, and were helped down the sérac wall by steps cut by Josef Knubel in prospecting the route to the Col de Pétéret for Mr. Eustace Thomas's party. Descended from Col de l'Innominata in a terrific thunderstorm—the same storm that produced a cloudburst over Montreux. Arrived Gamba hut, 21 hrs.

This descent from the Col de Pétérét is probably the first save the fatal one of Professor F. M. Balfour and his guide J. Petrus ('A.J.' 11, 90-91).

MONT BLANC, 4810 m. = 15,782 ft., B.I.K., *via* COL MAUDIT (Gugliermi's route). Aug. 14, 1927. Messrs. F. S. Smythe and G. G. Macphee. Left Torino hut in brilliant moonlight at 00.30. Crossed bergschrund without difficulty at 02.30. Using Eckenstein crampons climbed steep hard snow to a conspicuous rock-tongue in the couloir. Good sound rock gave fine climbing till almost under the great sérac wall that defends the col proper. Kept too far to the left, and after difficult climbing on icy rocks traversed to the right, where a large cairn was found. Steep rock with good holds led up to the right of the sérac wall, finally petering out in a snow and ice slope which led without further difficulty to the crest of the sérac wall and the col at 06.35. Summit of Mont Blanc du Tacul at 07.45. Left, 08.15. Mont Blanc in a *tourmente* at 12.30. Montenvers *via* Plan des Aiguilles, 18.00 hrs.

This is believed to be the first ascent of Mont Blanc from the Torino hut by this combination, and it is the third ascent of the Col Maudit from the Géant Glacier.

AIGUILLE DU PEIGNE (3192 m. = 10,474 ft., B.I.K.). The Editor tells me that this ascent, although very frequently made, has never yet been described in the ALPINE JOURNAL.

Our party, Mr. C. G. Crawford and myself, with Pierre Blanc and his son, Alphonse, left the Plan de l'Aiguille at 05.15, September 6, 1927. The ordinary route, which we took, lies up the couloir descending to the Glacier des Pèlerins from the 'Col' du Peigne. Keep to its true left bank for a short space, then cross the bed and ascend a sort of arête on the right bank to a spot suitable for rest and refreshment, overlooking the couloir. This first third of the couloir took us just 1 hr. from the foot of the rocks. It is neither very easy nor very difficult. We then descended into the couloir by a *rappel*, and proceeded up easy rocks on the left bank to a point where two subsidiary gullies unite with it. From this point one can *either* continue up the couloir to the Col du Peigne, still keeping to the easy rocks of its left bank (some loose stones); *or* else, though not quite so easily, one can omit the col, crossing the couloir to its true right, and climbing straight to the foot of the final chimney which leads to the crest of the ridge above the col. We took the latter route on the ascent, the former on the descent. The point of bifurcation is about two-thirds of the way up the couloir. The chimney, which must be taken in either case, and which is reached from the col by a zig-zag, is steep and exposed, and its difficulties increase as one climbs higher. The rock in it at one point was not so firm as one would

like it to be. From the top of the chimney a short but exposed and rather difficult stretch of slabs lands one on the first peak. From there to the summit is a diverting and aerial scramble along an arête, without difficulty, save for the descent into the last gap, which requires a short *rappel*. The summit was reached at 11.05, the rocks having taken 3 hrs. 40 mins. actual going. We got to the foot of the couloir at 16.00, the descent occupying much the same time as the ascent. The bed of the couloir should be avoided as far as possible, as stones fall in it.

E. V. SLATER.

AIGUILLE DE GRÉPON (3482 m. = 11,424 ft., *Vallot*). By the W. or Nantillons face (Ryan's Route). August 13, 1927. MM. J. Lagarde and H. de Ségogne. From the Nantillons glacier go up the Charmoz-Grépon couloir till you are level with the higher of two diagonal ledges seaming the W. face of the Grépon. Cross the couloir and take this rocky ascending ledge composed of mixed rock, ice and snow. The ledge, on the outer side of which is a little rocky crest, can be described as half ledge, half gully. Go up it and scramble, about midway up, over an icy step and rocky knobs; at this point the angle increases and approximates to 55° for about 100 ft. You now soon arrive at the spot where the 'Dunod' route falls in, some 65 ft. below the Grépon-Balfour gap. Attain this gap and *descend* to the foot of the Dunod chimney, whence the slab and the Lochmatter chimney,¹ followed by the summit crack, lead you to the top (4-4½ hrs. from the bergschrund).

The only 'rock' difficulty of this route is the Lochmatter slab. Your instinct is to try and cross it by placing your feet in a little horizontal crack. You must, however, grasp it with your hands, otherwise you are sure to get pounded about 3 ft. short of the chimney, owing to the gradual splay-out of the crack. Consequently, you must *descend* a little below the platform at the base of the Dunod chimney so as to reach a little nearly perpendicular 'gutter' rising in a corner (*dièdre*). Cross a slab and climb the gutter by minute holds till you attain a shallow horizontal crevice flattening out gradually to your *left*. (This crevice is somewhat vaingloriously described as a *ledge* in the account, *Vallot*, I, p. 67.) By means of this crevice you can scramble over a second slab which still separates you from the base of the Lochmatter chimney. Two small, almost invisible, knobs are very useful as footholds.

In snowy summers like 1927, it is a curious fact that you can get by this route to within 130 ft. of the summit of the Grépon, almost entirely over *ice*!

¹ The slab and Lochmatter chimney were first climbed by Messrs. L. W. Rolleston and H. C. Bowen with Josef and Gabriel Lochmatter. *Gabriel* led. August 26, 1913, *A.J.* 28, 83-4.

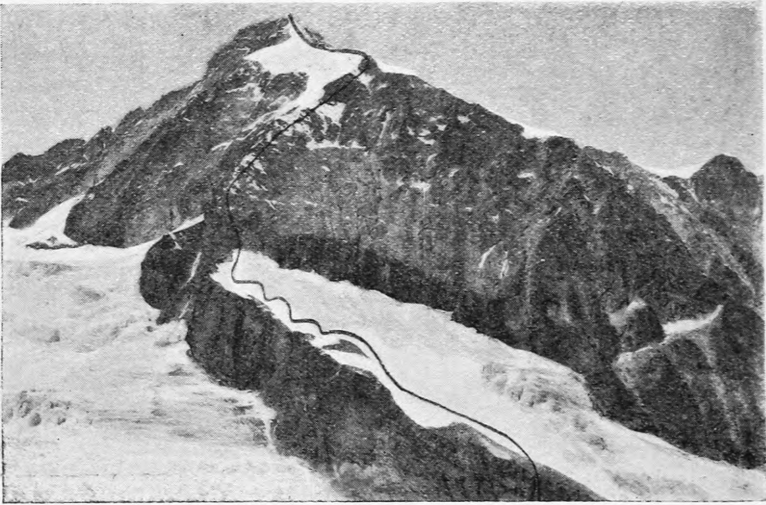
This route was taken first, both in the ascent and descent, by Captain V. J. E. Ryan with Josef and Franz Lochmatter in July, 1914 ('A.J.' 29, 200; with two marked illustrations). MM. Fallet and R. T. de Montcel made the second ascent in 1926 (G.H.M. *Annuaire*, 1927, p. 71).

On the day of our ascent the Grépon was for the first time climbed simultaneously by its two faces and two arêtes. One party scaled it by the Mummery route, another from 'O.P.,' ours by Ryan's route, while Madame Helburn and Miss O'Brien with Armand Charlet and [?] Alfred Couttet climbed the peak, by Young's Mer de Glace route, in remarkably short time.

J. LAGARDE.

Pennine Alps.

GRAND CORNIER, 3969 m. = 13,022 ft., BY E. ARÊTE, attained from the N.E. July 15, 1927. Mr. and Mrs. G. W. Murray, with



GRAND CORNIER, SHOWING MR. MURRAY'S ROUTE.

Théophile and Hilaire Theytaz. Owing to threatening weather, the start from Mountet was delayed till 03.30, and the party roped at 04.00 on the Durand glacier. Crossing the glacier, some steep ice-worn rocks led up to the glacier-covered ledge descending from point 3191 m. at the foot of the E. arête. Many tracks of chamois were seen on this glacier. 3191 m. was reached about 06.45, and the steep cliff 'overhanging' this point climbed just to the left (S.) of a couloir which breaks it near this point. The E. arête was then

followed till about 10.30 on rocks of no particular difficulty, and then on very bad snow, which was again deserted for rocks about 11.15. The point where the N.E. arête falls in was reached at 12.00. Thence to the summit in 3 hrs., a series of corniches near the top making progress very slow indeed. Following the N.W. ridge for perhaps 30 yards, a descent was made almost straight down towards Bricolla. The party unroped at 20.00 on the moraine, and the hotel was reached at 21.00 hrs. Given good conditions, these times could be greatly improved on, and the summit reached from Mountet by this arête in 7-8 hrs.

Bernese Oberland.

TRAVERSE OF THE HÖRNLI RIDGE. Point 2866 m. to the new Mittellegi Hut. August 6, 1927. Messrs. S. Uramatsu and S. Matsukata, with Emil Steuri and Samuel Brawand.



Photo, Wehrli.]

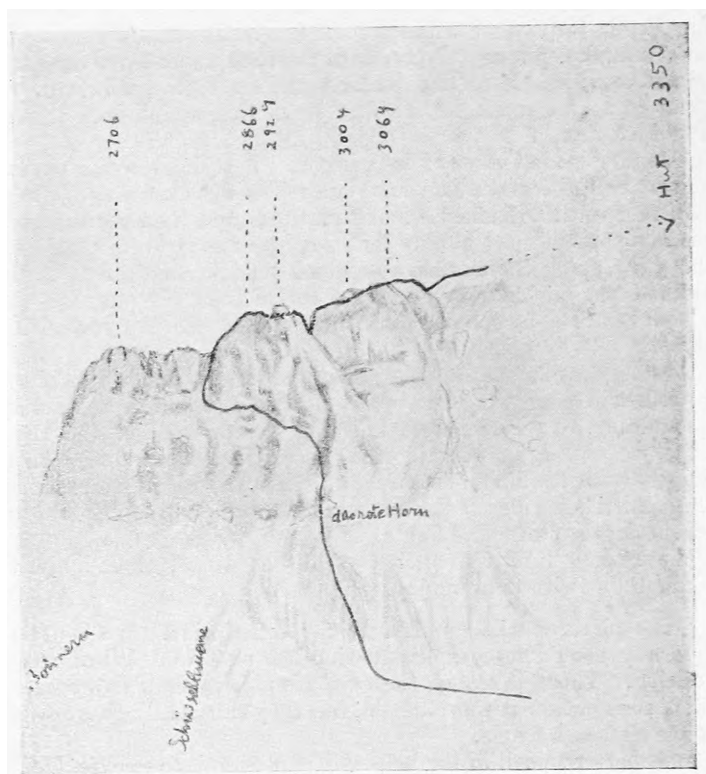
EIGER AND MITTELLEGI ARÊTE.

We left the Hotel Alpigen at 03.15 and followed the 'Bohner'n' way up to the W. rib of the great avalanche passage—*Schüssellauene*—directly below the Hörnli, where we began to ascend in the direction of a characteristic wide snow patch which marks what is locally called *das rote Horn*.

We gained the ridge at 07.30 at the saddle. After half an hour's rest we started to traverse the ridge. Point 2866 m. was gained at 08.45. The second Hörnli peak was not climbed over but crept through; i.e. after a little excavating work we managed to make an

artificial tunnel of about 7 ft. through the foot of it to the other side. This short cut enabled us to get to the cleft as early as 10.30.

This is the prominent gap on the N.E. ridge of the Eiger which separates the point 2929 m. from the point 3004 m., or, in other words, the West-Hörnli from the East-Hörnli. [This place was not unfamiliar to us, as three of us, with other companions, came up to



HÖRNLI RIDGE WITH 1927 ROUTE.

this point in September, 1926. But the conditions were not quite favourable then and, moreover, we were not fully equipped to force our way. Result was a retreat down to Alpigen through mist and dusk. A bitter experience, the memory of which has never ceased to haunt us since.] There seem to exist two ways of getting to the W. top of the cleft: The first traverses the S.E. flank and gains the ridge by a long couloir dropping from the ridge to the Kalli glacier. This is very exposed. The other necessitates climbing the smooth face of the cleft directly upwards by means of a crack and then traversing to the S.E. flank over an edge to get to a gully behind it

and follow that gully to the ridge. The N.W. side of the ridge seems impossible neither does the climbing of the whole W. face of the cleft appear possible, as it projects towards the middle.

We chose the second way. The first few metres of the crack were comparatively easy. But then it becomes too narrow to allow either hand or foot to get in, while between the top of the crack and the edge there exists a completely smooth face which is absolutely impossible to traverse without some artificial aids. We used three nails and two pitons. Boring into the rock under these conditions meant considerable sacrifice of time and strength. However, with great effort we managed the first 10 metres, which took between 2 and 3 hours.

Then the second stage of work began. Belaying the rope over the highest nail, the first man swung himself slowly over the edge to the S.E. face until he gained a small platform and then the bottom of the above-mentioned gully. The next 30 metres were climbed by this gully under the most exposed and difficult conditions. At last at 14.00 the first man stood on the top of the cleft, but more than 2 hours had to be spent before the last left this gap behind him, 16.15.

Although we knew that the rest of the ridge was not difficult and we still had plenty of time, we could not rest as the weather was threatening. In fact before finishing the traverse of the Hörnli ridge, we were caught in a storm. For 1 hour we sheltered on the ridge, waiting in vain for it to clear up. The traverse of the remainder of the Mittellegi ridge to the hut was not at all plain sailing, but only because of the storm and lightning.

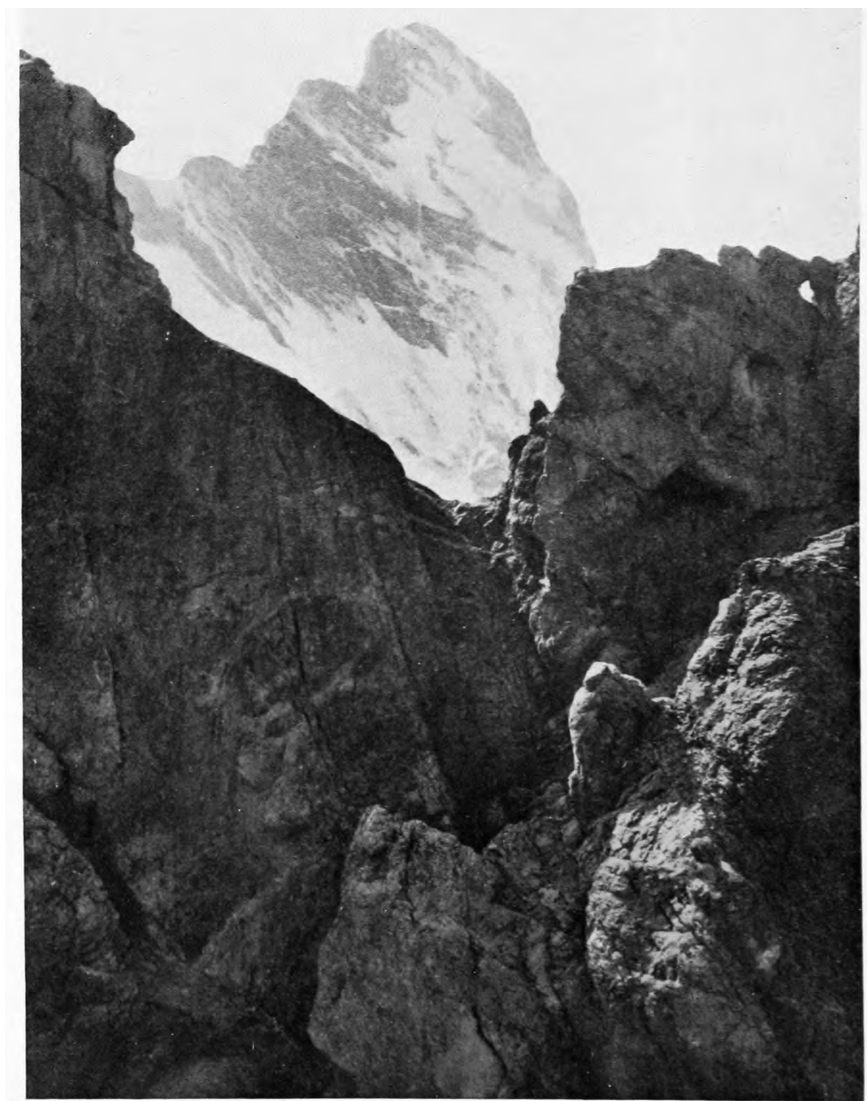
We rushed into the Mittellegi hut at 19.40, thoroughly wet through but with extreme joy.

Some pictures will supplement my description. We could not take any good photographs showing the cleft well, because of its position. Those taken on the spot are able to show how a certain crack runs or how it was climbed, but they can hardly give any idea of the cleft as a whole.

It is better to call in the help of a photograph to explain how we made a short cut, as it is difficult to make the point clear by any description, although it has little importance. The photograph is taken from point 2866 m. in 1926. The gap is the one between the II. peak and III. peak (last of the East-Hörnli). The black spot on the right hand of the gap is the cave through which we made a tunnel without any difficulty. A hole near the skyline of the ridge will serve to explain how the ridge is suffering from weathering, especially at this point.

S. MATSUKATA.

[The *Climbers' Guide*, Bernese Oberland, I, i, pp. 144-9, gives full details of the history of the Hörnli, of which all the points had previously been climbed. This appears to be the *first* complete traverse of the ridge, as well as a new 'combination.'



Phot. S. Matsukata.

EIGER WITH GAP BETWEEN PEAKS II AND III
from Point 2866 m.

The credit of the first *upward* traverses of the Hörnli-Mittellegi-Eiger arête thus clearly belongs to the Japanese parties and their guides, 'A.J.' 34, 166-7.—*Editor.*]

Drakensberg, Natal.

An attempt on CATHKIN PEAK (c. 10,500 ft.). July 13, 1927. Messrs. G. F. Travers-Jackson and O. K. Williamson left at 07.45 a camp in the Hlwazeni valley situated about 200 ft. above its level floor. The Hlwazeni valley runs in a direction somewhat W. of N. and separates the main Drakensberg ridge from the subsidiary one, of which the chief summits are the Monk's Cowl and Cathkin Peak. At its highest point (S.) it is close to the junction of these two ridges. We traversed slopes on the true right of the valley, then ascended a glen in an approximately N.E. direction to the depression separating Cathkin Peak and Monk's Cowl, Cathkin Neck reached at about 09.40. We descended the left-hand slopes of Monk's Ravine, approximately in a N.W. direction, for about 300 ft., then traversed to the left, slightly ascending, on the grassy slopes immediately under the rocks of Cathkin Peak.

The slopes from here onwards were frozen hard and were covered by a thin layer of recent snow. Above us loomed the precipitous rocky wall of the S. bastion of Cathkin Peak, separated from the main peak by a well-marked depression. Our slopes brought us to the right-hand side of the deep ravine on the S.E. side of the mountain, which descends from close to the summit. The slopes on the left-hand side of the gully which forms the bed of this ravine are far steeper than those on its right; they are, in fact, quite precipitous. The slopes on the right consist of steep grass separated by low rocky walls which extend horizontally, a formation characteristic of the Drakensberg. Having reached the actual gully, it was found that its direct ascent would consume too much time, owing to rock work interspersed with ice which would be involved; accordingly, the slopes on its right were ascended in zigzag fashion. Two later attempts to ascend directly by the gully were given up for similar reasons. At one point it was necessary to ascend one of the low rocky walls by a chimney some 25 ft. high, affording some delightful ice work. Steep, grassy, and rocky slopes then led to a short level rock ridge. From a ledge some glazed rock slabs had then to be climbed to a good platform about 20 ft. above their base. Descending from this, a sensational though not difficult traverse to the left (looking up) under a rocky bulge brought us to steep rock and grass, and following this the ascent of a short chimney crowned by a chock-stone led us to the foot of the last chimney but one, perhaps 80 ft. high. The lower portion of this (15-20 ft. in height) contained some ice and led us through a hole.

Above this lay a choice of routes, obviously none of them

easy. As it was now 17.00, and only about an hour's daylight remained, although we estimated our height as only about 150 ft. below the summit, it was considered unjustifiable to proceed farther, and we reluctantly started the descent. This was effected by approximately the same route as used in the ascent by the grateful aid of a nearly full moon which shortly rose above the crags on our left. Owing to the exigencies of the steep icy slopes, the rope was not discarded until the Monk's Ravine was again reached. In this we were greeted by a hurricane of wind. After becoming involved in some thorn bushes we finally regained camp at 02.50 on the 14th inst., the expedition having lasted 18 hrs., including halts of approximately $1\frac{1}{2}$ hr. From the time of leaving the Monk's Ravine during the ascent the slopes where they were not snow-covered were hard frozen, and we were subjected for a considerable part of the day to a very cold wind; apart from this the weather was very fine. Many hours of valuable time were, of course, lost in working out the best route.

We both are of the opinion that owing to the continuous care needed for many consecutive hours on the exceedingly steep slopes, especially during the descent, the expedition under the circumstances in which we undertook it must be ranked as a really difficult one. Probably the conditions were exceptionally bad; snow had fallen on the mountain two days previously. It has been suggested that the above record may be desirable, although we were unsuccessful in that we failed to reach the summit. It is certain that the climb afforded a day of magnificent mountaineering experience.

O. K. WILLIAMSON.

ALPINE NOTES.

THE ALPINE CLUB OBITUARY :	Date of Election
Howard, Eliot	1867
Mortimer, Alexander	1867
Michell, Colonel J. W. A.	1882
Spence, W. M.	1891
Fletcher, Colonel P.	1892
Barran, Alfred	1897
Minchinton, Major H. D.	1909
Bicknell, R. P.	1911
Minor, P. S.	1911
Lamb, R.	1917

'BALL'S ALPINE GUIDE,' THE WESTERN ALPS.—The edition (1898) by Mr. Coolidge covers the Maritimes, Graians, Dauphiné, Mt. Blanc group, and Pennines to the Simplon. With maps of each district, 1 : 250,000, and a general map. Price 10s., or 10s. 4d. post free. Obtainable from any bookseller or the Assistant Secretary.

'BALL'S ALPINE GUIDE,' THE CENTRAL ALPS. Part I.—The edition (1907) by Rev. A. V. Valentine-Richards covers Switzerland and N. of the Rhone and the Rhine. With nine maps, 1 : 250,000, and a general map. Price 5s., or 5s. 4d. post free, or unbound 2s. 6d., or 2s. 10d. post free. Obtainable as above.

'BALL'S ALPINE GUIDE,' THE CENTRAL ALPS. Part II.—The edition (1911) by Rev. G. Broke covers the Alpine regions S. and E. of the Rhone and Rhine as far as the Adige, *i.e.* the Lepontine, Grisons, Rhaetian (including Bernina), Ortler and Adamello groups. With nine maps, 1 : 250,000, and a general map. Price 5s., or 5s. 4d. post free, or unbound 2s. 6d., or 2s. 10d. post free. Obtainable as above.

'GUIDES DES ALPES VALAISANNES.'—

Vol. I. Col Ferret to Col de Collon, by M. Kurz, 10s.

Vol. II. Col de Collon to Col Théodule, by Dr. Dübi, 9s.

Vol. III. Col Théodule to Weisstor, by Dr. Dübi, 8s.

Vol. IV. Col Simplon to Furka, by M. Kurz, 8s.

At Stanford's, Long Acre, W.C. 2.

'GUIDE VALLOT.' Vol. I. LES AIGUILLES DE CHAMONIX.—Par J. de Lépiney, E. de Gigord and Dr. A. Migot, with 39 route-marked illustrations and 2 outline maps. Paris : Fischbacher, 33 rue de Seine. 1925. 20 fr.

This admirable Climbers' Guide is a complete monograph of the Aiguilles and may be said to be a much enlarged and more elaborate 'Kurz' or 'Mont Blanc Führer.'

'GUIDE VALLOT.' Vol. II.—L'Aiguille Verte, par Henry de Ségogne, E. de Gigord, J. de Lépiney, J. A. Morin, with 34 route-marked illustrations and 5 maps. Paris : Fischbacher, 33 rue de Seine. 1926. 25 fr.

A CLIMBER'S GUIDE TO THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS OF CANADA.—By Howard Palmer and J. Monroe Thorington, published for the American A.C. by the Knickerbocker Press, N.Y., 1921. This very useful summary, with several maps, of what has been done in the Rockies to 1921, can be obtained from the Assistant Secretary, 23 Savile Row, price 7s. 6d.

THE 'CLUBFÜHRER DURCH DIE BÜNDNERALPEN.'—Vol. IV., covering the Bregaglia and the Disgrazia group, by H. Rütter, with the assistance of Christian Klucker, can be obtained from Sauerländer and Co., Aarau, Switzerland.

LES ALPES DE SAVOIE.—Vol. VI., Part I., by Commandant Emile Gaillard, M.C. (Dardel, Chambéry, 27 fr. 50 post free), covering the

groups Trélatête, Bionnassay-Gôûter, M. Blanc, Brouillard-Pétéret, and Maudit-Tour Ronde, with skeleton maps of each group and several marked sketches, has just appeared. It follows generally the plan of the Kurz guide, and includes the full information of all recent climbs.

Part II., covering the groups of the Chamonix Aiguilles and the groups of the Grandes Jorasses and the Talèfre, will appear very shortly and can be subscribed for at 22 fr. 50 post free.

The full series is as follows :

Vol. I. Le Massif entre l'Arc et l'Isère (new edition).

Part I. N. of Col de la Vanoise, 27 fr. 50 post free.

Part II. S. of Col de la Vanoise, 22 fr. 50 post free.

Vol. II. La frontière entre la Seigne et le Thabor, 22 fr. 50 post free.

Vol. III. Les Massifs entre la Savoie et le Dauphiné, 24 fr. 50 post free.

Vol. IV. Les Massifs de Beaufortin et Les Bauges, 27 fr. 50 post free.

Vol. V. Les Massifs entre le Lac d'Annecy et le Léman (to appear in 1927).

Vol. VI. Le Massif du M. Blanc.

Parts I. & II. as above.

The volume of Commandant Gaillard's 'Les Alpes du Dauphiné,' Part II., covering the Massifs of the Meije and Ecrins, is announced for 1927 and can be subscribed for later.

These guides have full sets of skeleton maps and many route-marked sketches, so that the French Alps are now very well off for guidebooks.

Commandant Gaillard will issue early in 1927 a new coloured map of the M. Blanc group, scale 1:50,000, with all the most recent nomenclature. See 'Reviews.'

THE JOURNAL OF DE SAUSSURE covering his sojourn at Chamonix in July and August 1787, with an introduction and many notes on little-known details by Commandant Gaillard and Mr. Henry F. Montagnier, and heliogravures, was published recently, with the authorization of the family. It shows his preoccupations and hopes and finally his unmixed joy at the success.

Subscriptions can be sent direct to Commandant Gaillard, M.C., Barberaz, Savoie, France. Edition de Luxe, 4to, 150 fr., ordinary 4to, 60 fr., foreign postage, 5 fr.

MONT BLANC GROUP.—A query to the effect of 'Where are les jeunes Britanniques?' was made in the May number of the JOURNAL.

The performances of several young British parties during the past and generally so universally bad summer speak for themselves. They recall the classical days of 1881-1912.

We understand that the AIGUILLE DU ROC, Mummery's 'Crag on the Grépon,' was climbed for the first time, last August, by an American lady led by Armand Charlet. The expedition was repeated, a few days later, by a French G.H.M. party together with two English ladies. In each case the ascent was from the Mer de Glace and is reported to have been very difficult.

The N.W. slope of the COL MAUDIT has also been ascended by a French party. The 'pass' does not yet appear to have been accomplished *en col*.

The monument to PIERRE GASPARD, conqueror of the Meije, was duly inaugurated at St. Christophe-en-Oisans on July 14 last. It consists of a handsome granite slab, shaped like the outline of the Meije, and a bronze model of the ice-axe carried by Gaspard on the ascent. The inscription reads as follows :—

PIERRE GASPARD, 1834-1915.

'A la Mémoire du Vainqueur de la Meije, 16 août 1877, le Club Alpin Français (Section de l'Isère) avec le concours de la Société des Touristes du Dauphiné, d'alpinistes français et de membres de l'Alpine Club.'

1927. R.I.P.

The Jubilee of the first ascent of LA MEIJE was celebrated subsequently by a banquet at La Bérarde. MM. Berge, Président d'Honneur du C.A.F., Auscher, Gatine, Lory, Vallot, Blanchard, Legat and Gustave Bérenger were among the hundred or more distinguished members, ladies and gentlemen, of the C.A.F. who attended. Dévouassoud, son of Pierre Gaspard, was among the guests. The solitary representative of the A.C. at La Bérarde was made a guest of honour and takes this occasion to renew his warm thanks to his kind hosts for their, almost too great, hospitality.

Later again in the day, some 50 members and guides slept in and inaugurated the new Écrins or VALLON CLUB HUT. Nearly 40 others slept in the old Carrelet (!), while some 30 spent the night in the PILATTE or Gioberney Refuge. On July 15, with perfect weather, seven parties traversed the Pointe des Écrins, while the Pic Coolidge had, it is stated, some 100 persons on or about it. The W. peak of the Ailefroide was also climbed *via* the Brèche des Frères Chamois. The 'times' appear, not unnaturally, to have been exceedingly slow !

A new Chalet Hôtel has been opened at LA CHAPELLE-EN-VALGAUDEMAR. It is well spoken of and La Chapelle is now accessible (summer of 1927) by motor charabanc, three times a week, from Grenoble, in $3\frac{1}{2}$ hours or less.

BREITHORN GEMELLI.—With reference to a note on these points in 'A.J.' 39, 153, we are courteously informed by Signor Ferreri, Editor of the *Rivista Mensile*, that the name occurs in the 'Bolletino' of 1886, as also in Signori Bobba's and Vaccarone's *Guida delle Alpi Occidentali*, published in 1896. I have also lately received the latest revision of the Siegfried map sheet, No. 535, on which the name *Breithornzwillinge* is given to the point 4148 m. There is consequently nothing 'new' in the name and my apologies are due to the Editor of 'R.M.' and to Signor E. Barisone, the writer of the article in question.—E. L. S.

Nothing appears to be settled as to the site for the projected Club Hut for MONT POURRI. Les Brévières and Peisey are still the nearest (decent !) starting-points for this splendid peak (8–10 hrs.).

A large S.A.C. hut, called PIERRE BORDIER, has been constructed close to the Klein Bighorn at a height of 2980 m. on the right bank of the Ried glacier. The hut, which is about 6 hours distant from St. Niklaus, should prove very useful for the Balfrinhorn, Ulrichshorn and all the Nadelgrat peaks. This and the Topalihütte will, it is to be hoped, enormously increase the popularity of St. Niklaus, where superior accommodation at half the prices prevalent further south is available, but where the distances to the higher peaks have, hitherto, proved almost prohibitive.

The death is announced, at the age of 80, of Father ALJAŽ, the mountaineer-musician priest, who was one of the fathers of Alpine climbing in Slovenia and the Julian Alps.

With reference to the N. face of the TRIGLAV, we are given particulars, through the courtesy of Mrs. Copeland, of an attempt, this summer, to force a new route up this face further to the E. than the original¹ 'Austrian' route. A party consisting of M. Držaj and Madame Pibernik of Špik fame ('A.J.' 39, 138–41) had reached a point about one-third of the way up the wall, when a piton gave way and M. Držaj, the leader, fell some 45 m., the rope then fortunately hitching without a break. Madame Pibernik, although much injured by the shock, contrived to lower the partly unconscious M. Držaj from ledge to ledge for some 400 m.—an extraordinary feat for a slightly built lady of twenty-two. The accident took place at 09.30 and it was not till 18.00 that the much enduring party

¹ See illustration, *A.J.* 39, 136–7.

reached the big ledge at the foot of the face whence the N. routes start. Here they were rescued by a search party of whom Mrs. Copeland was one. Madame Pibernik's great performance undoubtedly saved both their lives and the accident is a further proof of the evils of attempting to scale otherwise impossible rocks by the pernicious modern habit of driving in pitons. 'M. Držaj is, miraculously, very little the worse for his fall.'

A party of three Slovene mountaineers has succeeded in forcing the 'diagonal' climb *across* the N. face of the TRIGLAV, which has been responsible for several previous fatal accidents.

According to *Der Berg*, 6, 1927, p. 120, another variation, called 'Bayerländer Weg,' has been forced up the lower part of the TRIGLAV'S N. face, September 6, 1926, by Herren G. Kuglstatter and H. Unger. The great gully was reached direct from the foot by a climb of 200 m. which took 8-10 hours. The route was composed of rotten and dangerous rocks and many pitons were used. The ascent was completed by the old 'Austrian' and 'Kugy' routes, but no 'times' are given for the ascent of the last 1450 m.

'R.M.,' xlvii, pp. 210-13, gives details of an Italian ascent of the N. face of the TRIGLAV. The mountain is called 'Il Tricorno.'

A well-informed evening paper, the *Evening Standard*, of September 8, announces that a Georgian party has made the ascent of ELBRUZ. The 'only previous ascent' is stated to have been in 1891!

Field-Marshal LORD METHUEN, G.C.B., etc. (Ordinary member, 1870-85, 1905-9), has been elected an Honorary Member of the Alpine Club. Lord Methuen made several important ascents with Christian Almer as far back as 1869, while in 1875 he took part in one of the earlier attempts on La Meije from the Rocher de l'Aigle and was in the second crossing of the Domjoch.

Mr. GEOFFREY WINTHROP YOUNG, accompanied by Mr. Claude Elliott, with Franz Lochmatter and Hans Brantschen, made the ascent of the Dufourspitze on July 24 in 9½ hours from the Bétemps hut, the descent to the Riffelalp taking some 8½ hours. Mr. Young also made the traverse of the Furgengrat and Theodulhörner as well as of the Riffelhorn. He appears to have stood the exertion—which even for him must have been excessively painful—remarkably well. He states that 'the expeditions were done largely to encourage persons like myself.'

A party of members of the C.A.F. and S.A.C., under the leadership of M. Joanides and Madame Boissonnas, left Marseilles on September 3

to ascend MOUNT OLYMPUS, visit the Valley of Tempe and the highly interesting Kalabaka monasteries among the 'Meteors' (the scene of a fight between French cavalry and Greek 'royalist' troops in 1917). The expedition, so writes Mr. Freshfield, is intended to inspire enthusiasm for mountaineering among young Greeks. The Hellenic Government is giving it every support. The expedition was to be accompanied by a cinema. It is regretted that owing to the necessary short notice neither Mr. Freshfield himself nor any members of the Alpine Club were able to join the party, which, we trust, will have been able to visit, the 'male' portion, at any rate, Mt. Athos and its wonderful monasteries. M. Bregeault, the well-known mountaineer, was to have accompanied the party. We hope that the expedition will have realized all its aims. LATER: We learn that the expedition was most successful.

We are glad to hear that Herr W. WELZENBACH, the President of the Akademischer Alpenverein, Munich, a mountaineer who has given proofs of his capacity and skill not only on his own mountains but also in great expeditions in the Pennines and Mont Blanc, has practically recovered from his recent illness. He, however, still suffers from a stiff elbow-joint, which will handicap his climbing. It is hoped that this may yield to an operation.—J. P. F.

Herr K. M. Oesterle is President of the AKADEMISCHER ALPENKLUB, Berne, for this summer, while Herr W. H. Amstutz is the *Hüttenchef*.—J. P. F.

Signor Commendatore BOBBA kindly informs us that Aimé Maquignaz will open next summer a new mountain-inn, which will probably serve as the main starting-point for the ascent of the Matterhorn from Breuil. The inn will contain 20 rooms and 40 beds. It is situated on the LE RIODÉ, 2804 m., promontory, on the path from Breuil to the Col du Lion. From the Breuil or Furggenjoch it is easily reached in 1 hour by skirting the S. flank of the Matterhorn (*ca.* 2 hours from the Hörnli Inn or hut). In any case, the inn will much relieve the pressure on the small Luigi Amedeo hut, where as many as 30 persons have been packed simultaneously, while in bad weather a safe return to Breuil, or even Zermatt, is assured.

Mr. D. F. Dangan is good enough to point out that the 'unnamed' col between the A. des Petites Jorasses and the A. de Leschaux referred to in 'A.J.' 39, 143, is in reality called COL DES PETITES JORASSES (3526 m., *Vallot*). See *La Montagne*, 1925, p. 211.

A RASH ASCENT OF THE AIGUILLE DE GRÉPON.—A party consisting of MM. André Roch and J. Belayeff [the same, who, with Armand Charlet, made the ascents of the Dent du Requin and Aiguille du

Plan in April, 1926], with Armand Charlet and Camille Dévouassoud, accomplished this climb, *via* 'C.P.' and the 'Cheminée Lochmatter,' on April 17, 1927. . . . 'Leaving Plan de l'Aiguille at 10.15 (late departure on account of uncertain weather earlier), we attained the Col des Nantillons, on ski, at 13.30. Excellent conditions. Thence, easily to "C.P." at 14.00. Since midday we had been nearly blinded by a violent wind, but the weather was absolutely safe. From "C.P." we reached the summit after 4 hrs. of the most intense and continuous exertion. The conditions were dreadful, rocks buried in snow or ice, progress was only foot by foot, cutting steps with the axe and finally—in the "Cheminée Lochmatter"—with a knife. Every crack and crevice choked with snow and ice; on no less than four occasions, from "C.P." upwards, were we obliged to stand on one another's shoulders. On the top, attained at 18.00, the gusts of wind were terrific. We made a very quick descent (by the "Cheminée Knubel") to the Col, Dévouassoud a masterly anchor as "last man." Picking up our ski, but not putting them on, we reached the foot of the Charmoz-Grépon couloir at nightfall, and, although very fatigued, descended as rapidly as possible to the Plan de l'Aiguille, arriving at 20.45. It was one of the hardest ascents that I have ever made, and if our party had not been a very strong one, it would certainly have been impossible to succeed under such shocking conditions. . . . I need not say how happy I am that we have succeeded.' (Letter from Armand Charlet, dated Argentière, April 19.)

We have received the following notes on an ascent of the AIGUILLE DE GRÉPON on August 3, 1927 :—'The Knubel chimney was led by Mr. G. S. Bower, the tactics being similar to those employed in the ascent of the Flake Crack on Scawfell central buttress, *i.e.* loops of rope threaded through the chockstone through which the rope is passed. The leader then brings his second up to the chockstone and ties him on to the said chockstone before leading the climb. The leader is thus well belayed. Knubel informs me that he led this chimney direct from the bottom without bringing his second up to the chockstone. This seemed to us, however, both unnecessary and unjustifiable when the chockstone offers so good a belay, and, while there is no actual stance, the second can wedge himself in very securely beneath the chockstone. Mr. Bower considers this climb harder than the Flake Crack on Scawfell. No ice-axe was used.'

F. E. SMYTHE.

Mont Blanc was climbed from the BRENVA glacier on July 26 by no less than three parties: *i.e.* a Swiss party consisting of Herren von Schumacher and Amstutz, a French party composed of M. Chevalier and two other members of the G.H.M., and a German party made up of Herr Allwein and a friend of the A.A.V., Munich. The Swiss and leading party state that the conditions were excellent,

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and that there was little or no step-cutting required except just towards the top ; the times are given as :—

Rifugio Torino	dep. 01.15
Foot of Brenva face	03.40–03.50
End of ice ridge	04.50–05.00
Last rocks	06.10
Col de la Brenva	07.35–07.40
Mont Blanc	08.40–08.54

These times are, to use the word of the greatest authority on the route, ‘marvellous.’ We are informed that the party (or parties ?) ‘had the wisdom to cut steps on the day before, so that they could make good progress in the early hours down the couloir of the Col de la Tour Ronde.’ If such was the case, all the more credit to the parties for their mountaineering instinct.

The Swiss party descended *via* Mt. Maudit and Mt. Blanc du Tacul, attaining Chamonix at 19.00 hrs., while the French and Germans descended ‘another way.’ Herr Amstutz rightly thinks ‘that von Schumacher and I hold the best times for the E. face of Monte Rosa (8½ hrs.), Pétéret ridge and Brenva. This is for us a great satisfaction and shows what one can do with Eckenstein crampons.’²

These ‘international’ parties were, it is understood, followed, quite independently, on the next day, by another, *i.e.* a British ‘rope,’ composed of Messrs. Smythe, Ward and Brown.

It is reported that Herren Obersteiner and Schneider of Graz made the ascent of Mont Blanc by the PÉTÉRET arête, starting on July 31 from the *Gamba* Club hut. The party bivouacked before reaching the Aiguille Blanche and the summit of Mont Blanc was attained very late on August 1.³

Herr von Kehl with Fritz Amatter and Fritz Suter of Grindelwald and a Courmayeur porter repeated the same route from the same hut on August 4. Owing to Amatter’s rightly considering it essential to cross the Fresnay glacier by daylight, it was arranged to bivouac *en route*. The party, accordingly, left the *Gamba* at 03.30 on August 3. The ‘Col⁴ des Dames Anglaises,’ between l’Isolée and the Aiguille Blanche was attained in 3 hrs., the A. Blanche was left behind by 13.30 and the Col de Pétéret reached at 15.30, where the party

² Any reader requiring an *unbiased* view on the said (or any) crampons should apply to that great mountaineer Pierre Blanc of Bonneval-sur-Arc.—*Editor*.

³ This appears to be the first attainment of the gap between l’Isolée and the A. Blanche from the Fresnay side.

⁴ This col was attained from the Brenva side, August 28, 1913, by Count Bonacossa, Signor Prochownick and Dr. Preuss, when making the first ascent of the A. Blanche by the S.E. arête, *A.J.* 28, 81–2.

dug a bivouac in the snow. Leaving the bivouac at 04.00 on the following morning, they arrived on the summit of Mont Blanc at 11.50 and Courmayeur *via* the Dôme route at 21.20. Amatter reports that he met with no serious difficulties. It is stated that the Courmayeur porter stipulated for and received a 2000 *lire* fee.

I. DE BRUYN.

The best way to reach the BERTHOL CLUB HUT from Ferpèche is to follow the ordinary Col d'Hérens route from Bricolla and to contour round the upper snows of the Ferpèche and Mont Miné glaciers. The two routes given in *Guide des Alpes Valaisannes*, ii., are very round-about.

H. R. C. CARR.

Between August 6 and August 20, members of the Climbers' Club, APPALACHIAN MOUNTAIN CLUB and of the Oxford Women's Mountaineering Club, met at Arolla, Bricolla and Ferpèche. The gathering numbered between 40 and 50 all told. The weather, except towards the end of the fortnight, was fairly good and most of the local peaks were climbed by various routes. On the eve of the meet the Dent Blanche was traversed by the N.E. arête by a strong American party led by Franz Biner. Some excitement was caused at Ferpèche owing to a guideless party becoming benighted on Mont Miné in a severe thunderstorm, but the incident had no serious results and provided a salutary lesson.

H. R. C. CARR.

If we are to credit Press reports, MONT BLANC DE COURMAYEUR has been rechristened *Monte Benito Mussolini*. We recollect that a similar change of nomenclature, proposed for the Adamello-Presanella peaks in 1919, was happily abandoned.

The fate of the SILS LAKE project, we are informed, is still undecided. A vigorous campaign continues to be carried on by the S.A.C., Sektion 'Bernina,' and other societies against the threatened desecration. It is stated that one very small sub-section of the S.A.C. has gone over to the enemy. It is to be hoped that they will soon see the error of their ways. It is expected that the assembly of the delegates of the S.A.C. will be practically unanimous against the project, and their vote will largely influence the action of the competent authorities.

We regret to learn that Mr. E. G. Oliver was seriously injured in the disastrous accident on the CHAMONIX-MONTENVERS railway last August. We wish him a speedy recovery.

The Alpine Club is indebted to Mr. H. W. Malkin, C.B., C.M.G., for the gift of several original letters from the Rev. THOMAS BRAND,

for some time tutor to Sir H. J. L. Graham (father of Sir Ronald Graham, H.B.M.'s Ambassador to the Quirinal), describing a tour in the Alps in 1780.

EARTH TREMORS AT PONTRESINA.—On August 14, 1927, at about 02.00, there was a very considerable earth tremor, followed during the next hour by three or four more very much less severe, and, on the morning of August 18, when we were ascending Piz Zupô, we found that a big crack in the upper névé of the Morteratsch glacier had been very much affected by this earth tremor. The crack is situated immediately below where the ordinary route to Piz Bernina turns off nearly due W., while the route to Piz Zupô goes straight on due S. The névé round the crack had completely collapsed and left a tumbled ruin of névé about 30 ft. wide. It was necessary to descend into the crack and cross by this tumbled névé to get across. It would be interesting to know if other persons have experienced the effect of earth tremors on séracs.

R. C. ASHBY.

We are very glad to learn that the S.A.C. has acquired for its library all that portion of the late Mr. COOLIDGE's collection dealing with the Alps and their history. 'The S.A.C. Library, consequently, finds itself richer by nearly 5000 volumes, many of great value.' From *Die Alpen*, October 1927.

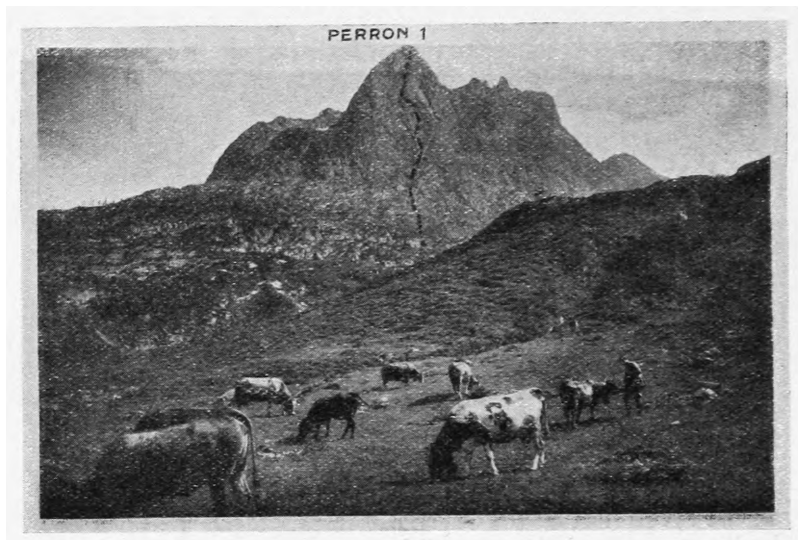
A new Club hut—**CABANE EDOUARD DUFOUR**—has been constructed by the S.A.C. on the left bank of the Glacier de la Neuvez. It is situated on *Les Essettes*, at a height of 2731 m., some 5 hrs. distant from the new hotel at La Fouly in the Swiss Val Ferret.

S.A.C. Club huts are to be erected on the CAVARDIRAS Lücke, 2705 m., above Disentis; Piz LISCHANNA near Vulpera in the Lower Engadine (completed); GLATTALP in the Bisisthal (completed); TURTMANNHÜTTE, 2500 m. on the Pipialp; the BRITANNIA Club hut is to be much enlarged.

We regret to learn that the well-known guide HANS BURGNER (1852–1927), of Grindelwald, has died. He will be remembered as the genial guardian of the Glectstein Club hut.

LE PERRON DE VALLORCINE, No. I, or Aiguille du Vent, 2573 m., was climbed by its W. face, September 21, 1927, by Monsieur E. R. Blanchet with Caspar Mooser. The ascent of this high and vertical face had previously been reputed as impossible, and from the Chalets d'Emosson has all the appearance of a Dru. The entire scramble was executed in quite indispensable *Kletterschuhen*. Rocks perfect, with minute and distant but reliable holds. In general, steer towards two rocks shaped like donkey's ears. These appear to be

at the summit but are in reality some 60 ft. below. A 60 ft. rope suffices. Many overhangs and absolutely smooth bits : ' I was more



SHOWING M. BLANCHET'S ROUTE.

pleased with this formidable scramble than with either of my ascents of the Lyskamm or Zumsteinspitze.'

E. R. BLANCHET.

According to the Siegfried map there are *two* Aiguilles du Vent, the other is given the height of 2581 m. The GRAND PERRON is measured as 2677 m. ; this latter has also been climbed by its steep N.W. face by M. Blanchet.

LA REBARMA, 2489 m., was climbed by its W. and unexplored arête, while the N. face of the Clocher de la Rebarma (nameless and unmeasured on the S. map) was descended this October by M. Blanchet.

M. Blanchet also reports a sensational descent, by his party, of the RIFFELHORN. In accordance with an ancient (and excellent) custom, it would be ' indiscreet ' to publish any details.

Miss Sheila Macdonald, daughter of Mr. Claude A. Macdonald, together with Mr. W. C. West and Major O. Lennox-Browne, made the ascent of KILIMANJARO (19,710 ft.) on July 31, 1927.

Mr. C. W. JARDINE, aged sixteen, son of Mr. J. W. Jardine, made with his father on August 27, 29, and September 1, 1927, the following expeditions : Brunni Pass, Piz Corvatsch, Pizzi Palü.

In commemoration of the Prime Minister's visit to the Dominions a mountain of some 11,000 ft. in the neighbourhood of the Yellowhead Pass has been christened Mount STANLEY BALDWIN.

Through the courtesy of Colonel von Steiger, head of the Topographical Bureau, Berne, and H.E. the Swiss Minister, I have received the advance *new* sheets (1927) of the SIEGFRIED MAP, 520 'Maloja' and 523 'Castasegna,' as also a 'tentative' copy of 520 with the grassy part shaded in *green*. It would be presumptuous as well as indiscreet to 'review' these splendid sheets. They are quite indispensable for mountaineers visiting the Bregaglia and Masino district.

E. L. S.

A new 'shelter hut' has been placed by the C.A.I. some 30 m. below the summit of the TÊTE de ROËSES on the Valpellina ridge. It is accessible in 4 hrs. from Prarayé. A description of the contents, etc., of these huts is given in the *Annuario* del C.A.A.I., 1924-6, pp. 35-41.

We regret to learn that Signor PINO PRATI has been killed, together with a companion, on the Guglia di Brenta. Signor Prati was the leader on some of the most difficult routes accomplished in the Brenta Group in recent years. Although aged only twenty-four, he was the author of the excellent C.A.I. Climbers' Guide, *Dolomiti di Brenta* ('A.J.' **38**, 352-3).

BRÈCHE SANS NOM.—In a footnote ('A.J.' **39**, 133) it is stated that 'this appears to be the third time that the Brèche (3725 m.; *Vallo*) has been attained,' the occasion referred to being the traverse of the Aiguille sans Nom-Aiguille Verte of September 21, 1926. Sir George Morse kindly points out that the footnote should read 'this appears to be the *fourth* time,' the said Brèche having been attained for the first time by himself with Ulrich and Hans Almer during an attempt on the Pic sans Nom on July 30, 1889, as stated by Mr. Wicks ('A.J.' **15**, 335, 337). On this occasion the *descent* of the long and steep couloir, all good snow, took but little over an hour.

JUNGFRAUJOCH.—With reference to Mr. Oliver's paper, 'A.J.' **39**, 49-51, Mr. Claude Macdonald writes: 'In that excellent paper it is stated that after the 1873 crossing of the Jungfrauoch, Andreas Fischer crossed it in 1894 with difficulty and was of opinion that it had not been crossed "for several years." I crossed it in August 1889 with Christian Jossi and Josef Taugwalder (then a boy) as porter. The Grindelwald guides declared the pass to be then impossible owing to enormous crevasses on the left, N.E., side and a corniche on the right, S.W., side. Seiler of the Wengern Alp told

me that he could not remember when it had been crossed last. We mounted to the plateau between the two icefalls and took the right side, as the crevasses to the left appeared impossible. We reached this side of the summit ridge in $5\frac{1}{2}$ hrs., finding a huge ice wall all along the top. After spending 1 hr. trying to find a way round, we decided to try and hack our way through the wall at its W. extremity, where it appeared least formidable. After 1 hr. of hard chopping, we contrived to creep through a hole in the ice wall on to the summit on the other side and so descended to Concordia and the Eggishorn. I remember in those far-off days, the Scheidegg hailed our appearance on the summit with much firing off of cannon !'

The ancient Refuge XAVIER BLANC, above Le Clot-en-Valgaudemar, has been transformed into a modern Chalet Hôtel. (Communication from M. Maurice Paillon.)

A bronze tablet was unveiled on September 11, at Valtournanche, to the memory of DANIEL MAQUIGNAZ (1856-1910). Signor Comendatore Bobba represented the Alpine Club. The handsome tablet, the erecting of which is largely due to Captain J. P. Farrar, is inscribed as follows :

DANIEL MAQUIGNAZ,
GRAND MAÎTRE DE L'ALPINISME.
HOMMAGE.

WE learn with deep regret of the sudden death, on November 6, of Dr. D. G. HOGARTH, C.M.G., President of the R.G.S., distinguished alike as a great scholar, archæologist, and man of action.

HIMALAYAN NOTES.

THE MOUNTAIN CLUB OF INDIA came into existence at Calcutta on September 23, 1927. Brig.-General the Hon. C. G. Bruce, C.B., M.V.O., has been elected President and Mr. W. Allsup, Gun and Shell Factory, Cossipore, Calcutta, is Secretary. Members are being vigorously recruited and rules framed. We wish this, the youngest, possibly some day the most important, of all the Alpine Club's numerous and prosperous offspring, every conceivable success and fortune.

It is stated in the Press that an ITALIAN EXPEDITION to the Himalayas, under the auspices of the Milan Section of the C.A.I., is in contemplation. The British and Indian Governments having given their consent, another attempt, it is said, will be made on K². We wish the Expedition, should it materialize, every success, and can assure its members that they will not find themselves held up or arrested—on British territory—by irregulars or frontier guards.

NEW ZEALAND NOTES.

MR. MALCOLM ROSS kindly informs us that besides the expeditions of Messrs. Porter and Kurz, described in the present number, the following important climbs were accomplished during the last summer in the Southern Alps :—

MOUNT DE LA BÈCHE (10,058 ft.); December 30, 1926, Messrs. Syme, Mace and Allan, *via* Rudolph glacier to Graham's Saddle, S.W. face, S.E. arête.

MOUNT ELIE DE BEAUMONT; January 5, 1927. Messrs. Syme, Mace and Allan, *via* E. face and S.E. arête.

MALTE BRUN; January 6, 1927. Messrs. Syme and Mace, *via* Malte Brun glacier and W. arête.

MOUNTS GREEN AND WALTER (9507 ft.); January 14, 1927. Messrs. Syme, Mace and Allan, *via* E. arête to divide, N.E. arête to Mount Green, by S.W. arête to Mount Walter.

HAMILTON (9915 ft.); January 21, 1927. Professor and Mrs. Algie with C. Williams, *via* Darwin glacier to head of Bonny glacier, up 'main' arête to summit.

MOUNT SEALEY (8651 ft.) was climbed many times, while the Copeland Pass was ascended thirteen times, Graham's Saddle four times, and Glacier Dome seven times during the season.

The Hermitage has been well patronized and several new hostels will be opened for the next season.

ACCIDENTS IN 1927.

ONCE again the list of accidents makes sad reading. The Alpine Club has lost a Vice-President, a mountaineer of great experience and distinction as also one of its most invaluable 'Himalayan' members, but we may consider ourselves fortunate to have escaped comparatively lightly. The greater number of accidents has occurred, as usual, in the Eastern Alps. The vast majority were, we regret to say, easily avoidable. The numbers of guideless climbers—we have heard of no fatal accidents to guided parties—have increased beyond

all reckoning. We can also add that the number of capable members of these guideless parties is, probably, higher now than it ever has been. But it still remains a fact that the percentage of competent to incompetent parties is far too low. There are reasons for this disastrous state of affairs. Before the war beginners were wont to acquire their mountaineering experience under competent professionals; now, with increased guides' tariffs and decreased incomes, most beginners prefer to learn their business with amateur leaders often nearly as inexperienced and sometimes more reckless than themselves. Quite casually they start their career with the most difficult ascents—ascents which thirty years ago the aspiring mountaineer would never have dreamt of undertaking before his third or fourth season. We ourselves beheld such a party of four gaily setting forth for a difficult ice and rock mountain with only one competent member, the others freely confessing their lack of knowledge of icemanship or ropecraft. Caught in bad weather on an ice slope, after many hours of ascent, but still thousands of feet below their summit, they were able—providentially—to return in safety. To such parties the use of CRAMPONS is a snare and a delusion. They have read foolish tales by enthusiastic mountaineers declaring that experts can mount or descend ice slopes of 70° without step-cutting, even without the support of the axe.¹ It is to be noted that these 'experts' never give the *height* of the ice slope of 70° , which, axeless, they propose to ascend or descend on their crampons. You can be very bold if the probable fall will not exceed 8–10 ft. ! Such flagrant nonsense encourages the beginner to think that he can move safely, without serious previous practice, on slopes of 45° . He finds that he cannot, and 'another Alpine disaster' is too often reported. Such an one occurred last August low down on the Z'mutt ridge of the Matterhorn, the victim being armed only with an umbrella and—crampons.

Another fruitful source of accidents is the modern craze among amateurs for climbing in bad weather. This evil is becoming ever increasingly prevalent, and too many persons who have successfully climbed Welsh, Lakes, or 'Saxon Switzerland' boulders in rain, imagine that serious expeditions may be attempted with similar impunity in the High Alps.

Of four accidents that occurred in the Valais within the space of 10 days, three were caused solely by *starting* and continuing to climb in absolutely hopeless weather conditions.

¹ See *Alpinisme*, No. 7, pp. 211–33, translated from D. & C.E.A.V. *Zeitschrift*, 1925, pp. 204–24, with preposterous illustrations.

THE ACCIDENT ON THE SOUTHERN AIGUILLE D'ARVES.

ON July 31, at 3 A.M., Raymond Bicknell, his son Peter, A. F. Procter, and Sir J. W. L. Napier left Valloire to traverse the Aiguille Méridionale d'Arves to La Grave: it was proposed to ascend by the N.E. face direct from the head of the Glacier de Gros Jean to the Brèche in the S.E. arête, and to descend by the ordinary route.

'By 10 A.M. we had reached the head of this glacier, where we were able for the first time to decide on our exact route. Our objective, the Brèche,¹ was at the head of a snow and ice couloir, some 1000 ft. high, flanked by broken faces of rock. It was decided to ascend by these rocks, keeping as far as possible close to the couloir.

'For 3 hours we made slow but steady progress, though the rocks from the start proved to be loose and rotten. By 1 P.M. we had reached a point where the rocks became more difficult, being, actually at the sides of the couloir, quite impracticable. At this point the couloir contracted, and, for about 50 ft., was distinctly steeper. The best route appeared to be straight up the couloir until over this step, and then to take once more to the rocks on the side.

'With this in view we cut steps across to an island of rock which divided the couloir, and as Bicknell would have to lead nearly 80 ft. from this island before reaching a secure enough position from which to bring the second man on, our second 80 ft. rope was attached between him and Napier.

'Bicknell then traversed the gentle ice slope to the true right bank of the couloir and proceeded up the steeper ice, cutting steps with his right hand and holding the rocks on his left with his other hand. During this manœuvre the position of the three of us was as follows: Napier, second on the rope, was at the top of the island and had a small belay for the rope, but was otherwise in a poor position; Procter, third, 10 ft. below Napier, was on the right of the island, and though in a physically uncomfortable position was well placed to hold a pull from the left; Peter, at the foot of the island, a few feet below Procter, was in a good position where he was able to belay the rope round his ice-axe, which was inserted in a crack right up to its head.² We consulted as to which side of our rock a fall might occur and Napier arranged his belay accordingly, *i.e.* to

¹ Marked *Brèche supérieure* in the illustration, *La Montagne*, 1910, facing p. 344.—*Editor*.

² See *La Montagne*, 1910, pp. 321-59, 397-440, especially the marked illustrations facing pp. 338 and 344. In the latter, the scene of the accident is about two-thirds of the way up the extreme *left-hand* ice couloir. The route attempted is a variation of the *right-hand* one shown on the illustration facing p. 338.—*Editor*.

safeguard a fall to the right—the likely direction; without the assistance of this belay he could not hope to hold the rope in case of a fall. During this time we began to suffer slightly from cold and mild cramp in the fingers. As cutting steps with one hand proved a tedious job, Bicknell's progress was very slow. On one occasion he asked us whether, in view of the lateness of the hour, we should prefer to turn back. We replied that we left it entirely in his hands; he decided that it would probably take less time to complete the traverse to La Grave than to return down the loose rocks up which we had come. He appeared quite confident, and on two occasions said that a few more steps would get him over the difficulty.

'After about half an hour's cutting, and when he was some 60 ft. above Napier, without a word of warning and with no apparent effort to stop himself, Bicknell fell from his steps and shot down the ice slope to our left. When he had fallen the full 120 ft. of the free rope the strain came on Napier who, with his belay rendered useless, the fall occurring to the *left*, was pulled from his position; Napier had fallen some 25 ft. when Procter, dragged against the rocks to his left, held the rope, with the full weight of Bicknell and Napier on it; the rope, however, was drawn over Peter's shoulders so that the latter could take some of the strain.³ Napier was lying on steep rock 20 ft. below Peter, with Bicknell hanging out of sight some 70 ft. below Napier. The latter at once managed, by getting hand-holds on the projecting rock, to take some of the weight, while Procter secured the rope round a suitable belay. As the full weight of Bicknell was still on Napier, it was necessary to see if Bicknell, from whom we had heard no signs of life, could be brought to rest on a ledge. To do this, Procter eased the rope round the belay, while Napier lowered himself to a more secure ledge. Bicknell's full weight was still on the rope, and so Peter detached himself and climbed down to where his father was, using the rope between Procter, Napier and his father to lower himself by. It was at once evident that Raymond Bicknell had been killed outright, as his skull was completely smashed in. It was obvious, in fact, that he was dead *before* his fearfully rapid slide had tautened the slack of the rope.

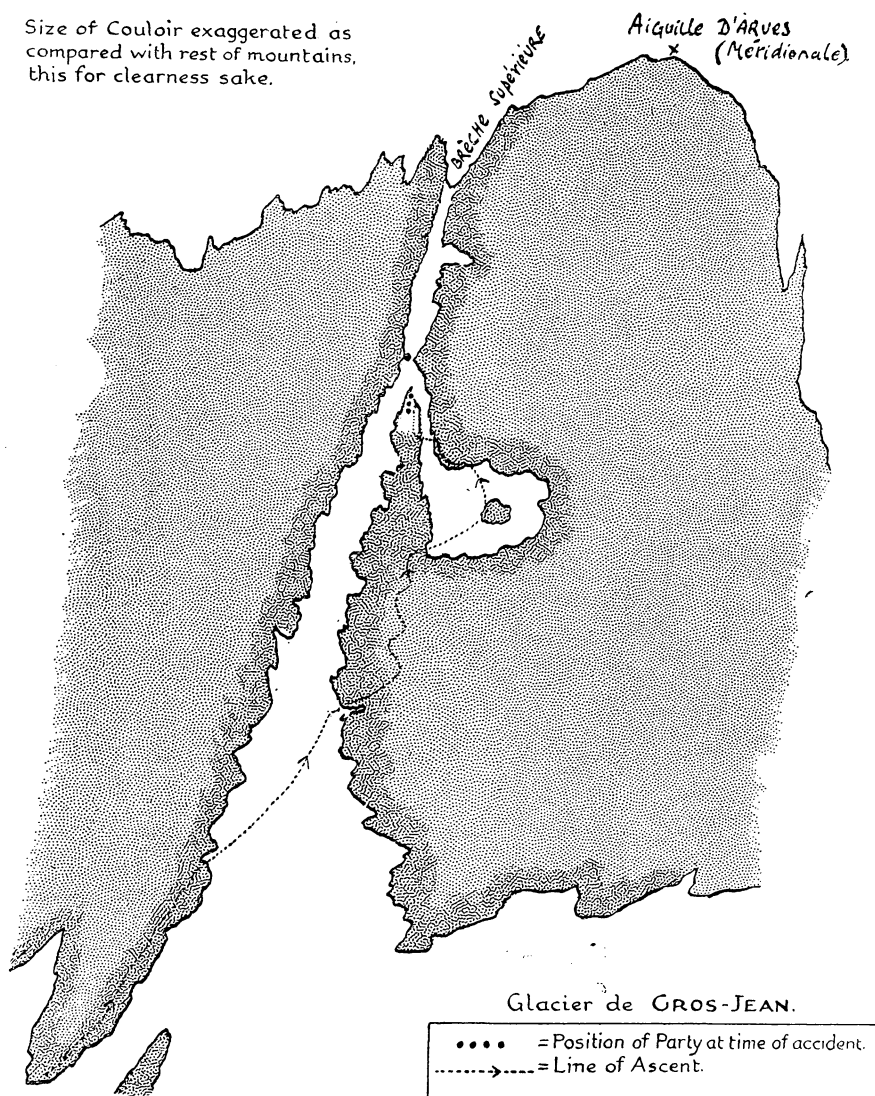
'It was essential for our own safety in descending that we should have the second rope which was attached to Bicknell. We decided, accordingly, that the only course open to us was for Peter to detach the body and to allow it to slide down on to the glacier below.

'With the help of the spare rope we made our way safely down on to the glacier, which we reached some 4 hours later,

³ It is interesting to note that the rope—which rendered such invaluable service—was a light one by Frost, in its second season.—*Editor.*

and leaving the body where it had fallen we returned to Valloire, getting there about 11 P.M.

Size of Couloir exaggerated as compared with rest of mountains, this for clearness sake.



'It is impossible to state the cause of the accident. That Bicknell gave no warning cry, that he made no apparent effort to stop himself, and that his last remark was one of confidence, seem to indicate

that it was not an accidental slip. It would appear more probably to have been due to some form of heart failure, or violent cramp to which he had been subject as the result of an attack of phlebitis in the leg in the winter of 1924-25.

'The climb itself cannot be described as easy, but in attempting it we were undertaking a task of no exceptional difficulty, especially bearing in mind the great reputation Bicknell held as one of the leading amateurs of the day.'

[The subsequent proceedings in Valloire were carried out with great despatch and Raymond Bicknell was buried there.

Monsieur Pierre Dalloz, the distinguished French mountaineer, gave every possible assistance. He accompanied the search party of La Grave guides who brought the body down from its resting-place on the Glacier de Gros Jean. He then stayed the night with the relatives and accompanied them subsequently to La Grave.

M. Dalloz's kind and disinterested behaviour will not be forgotten by the friends and relations of Raymond Bicknell, and the JOURNAL avails itself of this opportunity of expressing to M. Dalloz the grateful thanks of the Alpine Club.

As the narrative points out, the immediate cause of the slip will for ever remain obscure, but one possible charge against Raymond Bicknell—that of rashness in attempting an expedition beyond his party's powers—falls automatically to the ground. The performance of the young survivors was superb. The feat of Mr. Procter in holding the fallen, Sir Joseph Napier's own accomplishments, and last, but not least, Mr. Peter Bicknell's courage in going down, unroped, to his father, and finally his skilful descent, shaken as he was mentally and physically, during that nightmare 4 hours, in the all-responsible position of last man, will stand high in the annals of modern mountaineering. We can only add that the collective deeds of the party were worthy of any veterans or of their intrepid, erstwhile leader himself.]

THE ACCIDENT ON 'THE MON.'¹

THIS peak, ca. 16,500 ft., in the Dhaulī Dhar range of the Himalaya, and of great steepness, as are most of those peaks, was the scene of the lamentable accident which occurred to Major H. D. Minchinton on June 3 last. Through the kindness of Lt.-Colonel H. Holderness, D.S.O., commanding 1/1st K.G.O. Gurkha Rifles, we are enabled to publish a full

¹ The name of the mountain, according to General Bruce, has been *indianized* from that of General E. D. Money.—*Editor*.

account of the tragedy abridged from the proceedings of the Court of Enquiry :

Rifleman Bhagtbir Thapa states :—

‘ I left Dharmsala on Thursday, June 2, with Major Minchinton and Rifleman Gunjsing on 4 days’ leave for the purpose of mountain climbing. We reached Triund on the evening of the 2nd of June.

‘ On the morning of June 3 we went out for the purpose of climbing a hill called locally the “ Mon.”

‘ We climbed the “ Mon ” and then decided to return. Rifleman Gunjsing started to go down first, Major Minchinton in the middle and I was the last. We were all roped together. We had to cut steps, as the snow was hard, in order to get down. We had not gone far when I slipped and fell down a short way, but was able to check myself from going far. Finding I had got out of the footsteps cut by the others, I attempted to re-join our path, when I was suddenly jerked off my feet and pulled down the hill. It is impossible to say how far I fell, but it must have been several hundreds of feet, and the only reason why I did not suffer more injury was because I was able during my fall to constantly check myself though unable to completely stop myself, because each time I attempted to do so I was dragged down by the rope. I received injuries to my head and right shoulder. When I was finally able to stop, I followed the rope to where Major Minchinton and Rifleman Gunjsing were. They were quite close together. On seeing me Major Minchinton asked me how I was and said that we had all three better rest for a few minutes. Major Minchinton and Gunjsing were then found to be unable to proceed further, so I took the rope off both of them, and on the Major’s suggestion went down for help. I found some gaddies and sent them up to the Major. The gaddies however soon returned. They said they had put Major Minchinton into a safe place but were unable to bring him further down, and they advised my going to Dharmsala and getting help from the regiment down there. In the neighbourhood of Lakha I met a sahib and his wife, whom I at once informed, and then went to Triund, where I passed the night.

‘ The time the accident took place was about 1 P.M.’

Lieutenant G. F. Bain-Smith, I.A.O.C., states :—

‘ On the 3rd instant my wife and I, having walked up to Triund forest bungalow, had breakfast with Mrs. Minchinton, who pointed out a hill on which Major Minchinton was climbing.



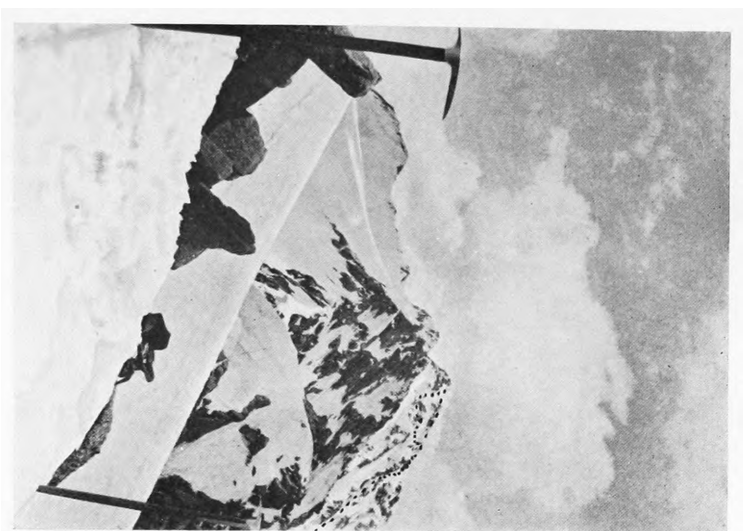
GENERAL ASPECT OF DHAULI DHAR
RANGE
from above Lakha.



APPROXIMATE
SCENE OF FALL

Photos. J. W. Rundall.

THE 'MON' FROM CHAMBA SLOPE OF INDRAHAR PASS.



THE 'NION' FROM SUMMIT OF
INDRAHAR PASS.

Dotted line is Captain Rundall's 1925 line of ascent.

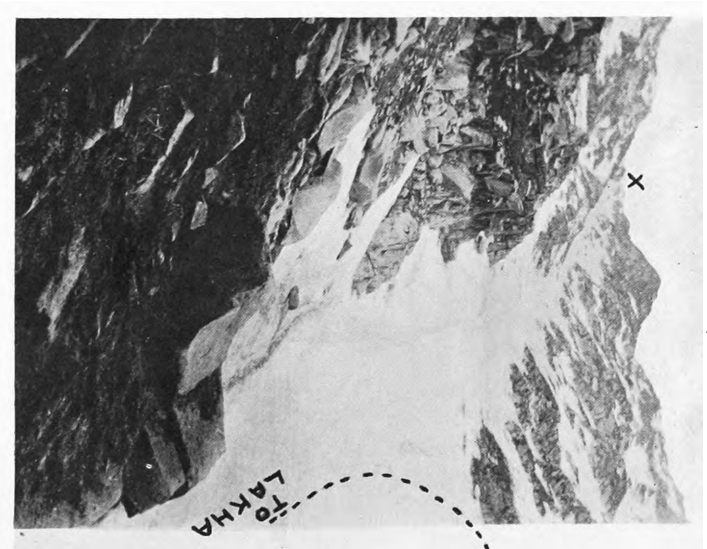


Photo. J. W. Rundall.

INDRAHAR PASS, 14,600ft.

Dotted line indicates part of route to 'Nion.'

We went on to Lakha, and at 2.30 P.M., as we were about to return, saw a Gurkha staggering along a path. He pulled himself together only enough to convey that Major Minchinton had had an accident. He said that Minchinton was about an hour's walk away. Had I known the difficulties ahead I would have sent at once to the Gurkha mess for help ; though, even so, this party could not have arrived much before nightfall.

'My wife went back to Triund to get help and I took a tiffin coolie on with me. The Gurkha attempted to come with me to show me the way, but was left behind. Having climbed 2000-3000 ft. I heard Minchinton calling and saw him in the middle of a snow slope. As I had no ice-axe or grass shoes it took me until 4.30 P.M. to cross an intervening snow slope which had a frozen crust on it ; kicking steps through the crust with stockinged feet was the only method practicable. Having crossed I found the second Gurkha sprawled face downward on a rock to which he had crawled off the snow slope. He had bad snow scrapes and cuts on his face and head. I left him there temporarily.

'Minchinton was about a hundred yards out from the rock on the slope. As I approached he was fully conscious and had changed from calling out in Hindustani to English, after he heard me answer. When I reached him he was still able to talk, though only at intervals. The only coherent information he gave was "we must have fallen 1000 ft. I cannot understand how any man can be alive after this. I have been here 3 or 4 hours." His climbing rope was curled up underneath him. He was cut in many places about the head and hands but not deeply ; the main injury seemed to be his back, which was twisted. I gave him brandy from his rucksack and chocolate, which he could not eat. He did not appear to be in much pain until I started to drag him down the slope on my coat. He then cried out, and was delirious the whole time I was dragging him down.

'I moved him about 500 ft. down. The snow began to freeze over at 6.30 P.M. I found I could no longer keep him under control (I was obliged to let my coolie stay behind, as he could not tackle the snow slope). I then went about one mile downwards and across the ice slopes and got two shepherds to come and help me. On my return Minchinton was unable to speak, but was conscious. We got him down another 500 ft. Whenever we moved him he was in great agony. Having reached rough and frozen snow we could get no further, and I sent one man down for more men. He did not return.

‘ At about 7 P.M. I went down again myself, and after great difficulty got four more shepherds. They were extremely reluctant to help. I sent these men back to Minchinton, but as I was exhausted could only follow by crawling. When I arrived by Minchinton I found that he was struggling, and even when I spoke to him he did not recognize me. His struggles prevented our moving him more than a few feet, the snow by this time having turned to ice. I sent the Gurkha who could just keep on his feet down with two men and made repeated efforts to move Minchinton. At sunset the shepherds deserted me.

‘ I stayed with Minchinton, who was now completely unconscious, whether alive or not I cannot say, for about half an hour after dark, but soon realized that nothing could remain alive on that snow after dark. The wind was very strong and there had been intermittent hail storms all through the afternoon. I had previously covered Minchinton with my coat. I got down to a fire below the glacier about 1½ hours after sunset and found Mrs. Minchinton with some men whom she had brought. None of these were capable or equipped to tackle the snow in the dark. I sent Mrs. Minchinton back to Triund, and on the arrival of the first working party at 3 A.M., escorted them a short distance to point out where Minchinton lay. In this evidence I mentioned certain difficulties ; these are merely mentioned in order to give reasons for the delay in moving Minchinton.’

Questioned by the court :—

Q. 1. Have you done much climbing previously in the snow ?

A. 1. None at all.

Q. 2. You say you heard first about the accident at 2.30 P.M.

What food arrangements had you for yourself after that time ?

A. 2. I had a slab of chocolate, which I lost after trying to give it to Major Minchinton, and at 2 A.M. on the 4th received a chupatti from one of the shepherds. I got breakfast at 9.30 A.M., my previous meal being 9.45 A.M. on the 3rd.

Q. 3. When you covered Major Minchinton with your coat, how were you dressed ?

A. 3. I had a khaki shirt, khaki shorts and a pair of stockings on.

Q. 4. At what time did you get any warmer clothes ?

A. 4. At 9 P.M. one blanket from a shepherd,

Q. 5. Have you suffered from any injuries as a result of what you did ?

A. 5. My feet are slightly frostbitten.

Q. 6. When you were dragging Major Minchinton along, had you slipped, how far do you think you would have fallen ?

A. 6. It is impossible to say ; the snow slope was about 2000 ft. down.

Captain J. O. Fulton, 1/1st K.G.O. Gurkha Rifles, states :—

‘ At about 9.45 p.m. on the evening of June 3 I received word from Captain Carrey, I.M.S., that he had heard that Major Minchinton had had an accident above Triund and requesting 20 men to be sent to Triund to bring him down. Along with Captain O’Ferral and 20 men I proceeded at once to Triund. Captain Carrey followed a few moments later. Half-way up to Triund we intercepted a letter from Mrs. Minchinton to Colonel Holderness which showed that the Major was still out in the snow. We had previously been given the impression that he was either at Triund or being brought there. On this we sent word for a party to be sent up equipped for climbing.

‘ On arrival at Triund at about 1.20 a.m. on the 4th we decided to equip 8 men as well as possible and to proceed to search for Major Minchinton.

‘ On arrival at the huts about a mile above Lakha we found Lieutenant Bain-Smith and one wounded Gurkha. Lieutenant Bain-Smith was thoroughly exhausted and shaking with cold, but was able to come far enough with us to point out to us where Major Minchinton was.

‘ There was an icy wind blowing and the surface of the snow was frozen, so there was little hope of finding the Major alive. At 5.15 a.m. we reached Major Minchinton. He was quite dead. The upper part of his body was frozen stiff, but his legs were limp. We then managed to drag the body down to a patch of rocks, cutting steps as we went along ; the men being laden with stretchers were at this stage some 500 ft. below. While the men were coming along we decided on the route that we should bring Major Minchinton down by. This entailed cutting a path across the nullah of a distance of about 70 yards. After working for an hour and a half, Captain O’Ferral and myself cutting steps while the men rested and strapped Major Minchinton on to one of the stretchers, we were able to cross this nullah, using ropes as we went along. The

snow slope was about 2000 ft. down. Directly we had got Major Minchinton across the bad bit, I went on ahead to give the news.'

Q. 1. Is this the first time you have used an ice-axe ?

A. 1. Yes. I have never used an ice-axe before.

Captain J. L. O'Ferral, 2/1st K.G.O. Gurkha Rifles, states :—

' On the evening of June 3 I accompanied Captain Fulton and 20 men up to Triund and afterwards went with Captain Fulton and 8 men to the huts above Lakha, where we met Lieutenant Bain-Smith, who was able to direct us to the place where Major Minchinton was. We reached Major Minchinton at about 5.15 A.M. Captain Fulton and I then dragged Major Minchinton down to some rocks, some forty yards below.

' The men arrived shortly after, and while they were resting Captain Fulton and I cut steps across a nullah preparatory to having the stretcher brought across. The snow was treacherous, being soft in places and very hard in others ; while the stretcher was being carried across with Major Minchinton on it I slipped, and had Captain Fulton not been holding the other end of the rope I might have fallen to any distance. When we reached the far side of the nullah Captain Fulton went ahead to take the news to Mrs. Minchinton, while I superintended the further removal of the body. The going was difficult and the men carrying the stretcher had a very hard time of it.

' About half-way to the huts, at about 8 A.M., Captain Hamber and some 40 other Gurkhas came to our help, and the body was then taken in reliefs to Triund and, later, to Dharmasala.'

[In addition to a letter and the proceedings of the Court of Enquiry forwarded by Colonel Holderness, we have received letters from Colonel E. M. Lang, Major P. H. Sharpe, Captain J. W. Rundall and others ; to all of these we return our best thanks. Captain Rundall, who has twice made the ascent of The Mon, is convinced that ' Major Minchinton's fall cannot have been less than 2000-3000 ft. ']

No further comments are required ; the accident appears to have been one of those that will always occur as long as mountaineering exists. It might, of course, be said that had Major Minchinton occupied the position of last man on the rope no accident, probably, would have occurred. We must

remember, however, that he was engaged in training his Gurkhas in mountaineering. The conduct of all ranks, and especially that of Lieutenant Bain-Smith,² was magnificent and worthy of the traditions of the British and Indian Armies alike.

THE ACCIDENT ON MOUNT EGMONT.

A FATAL accident involving the loss of two lives occurred on Mount Egmont, 8260 ft., North Island, New Zealand, on May 11, 1927.



Mt. EGMONT, N.Z.

We are indebted to Mr. A. P. Harper for many of the details, as well as for the topography of the mountain.

A party consisting of Captain N. Baines, Messrs. F. Latham, P. Taylor, and D. Allen, none of whom had had much mountaineering practice, made the ascent in perfect weather but wintry conditions. In the descent they occupied, roped, the following order: Baines (leading), Taylor, Allen, and Latham. Only two of the party appear to have possessed ice-axes. Some 700 ft. below the summit a slip occurred on hard wind-blown snow, and the whole party slid or rolled down for some 500 ft., finally bringing up on a kind of snow plateau. Latham was fatally injured. Taylor, severely hurt, attempted to drag down the still living Latham; Baines and Allen, who were also much injured, meanwhile freeing themselves from the rope. Taylor

² The *London Gazette* of September 30 announces that the King has awarded the Albert Medal to Lieutenant G. F. Bain-Smith, R.A.

and Allen were duly rescued by a party under the leadership of the well-known Mt. Cook guide, Murphy, but Latham had expired from his injuries, *en route*; Baines, meanwhile, having disappeared. The body of Baines was found by a search party on May 13, at a spot approximately half a mile from the scene of Latham's death. 'The deceased had apparently crawled on his hands and knees for some distance and had then fallen over a bank some 20 ft. high' [*Press reports*].

Murphy and the search parties had accomplished all that was humanly possible and the conduct of the survivors, of whom Allen was aged only sixteen, and who are now reported to be progressing favourably, is highly commended.

'Egmont is a walk—a volcanic cone, quite perfect—in summer you can walk up on scoria slopes, but in winter some 2000 ft. or more is snow-covered and large patches of snow remain on it through the summer and in the crater.

'I, as a matter of fact, made what I believe to have been the first snow ascent in 1895 and by exactly the same route as the party took, but in those days there were no tracks or mountain-houses. In the winter the snow slopes are steep, somewhere about 40°, but easy to walk up and glissade down if the snow is in good order—as we found it in 1895—but when the Baines party made the ascent there had been high winds and considerable cold. The light snow was thus blown off and the slopes were evidently partly hard snow with patches of glazed surface, and, here and there, of practically blue ice (there is no glacial ice on the mountain). Murphy—a first-class Mt. Cook guide—appears to have warned the party to look out for this ice, which he foresaw owing to weather conditions. From Fantham's peak (a shoulder of Egmont) to the top is some 1700 ft. ; there are no real cliffs or rocks there, but only many outcrops of hard snow . . . ' [*extracts from a letter from Mr. Harper*].

[I should like to add a short tribute to the memory of an old brother officer, Noel Baines, more especially as in the latter stages of the war he was under my immediate command. Gifted with unusually good linguistic and literary powers, he was of high intelligence and certain to make his way in the world. On the outbreak of the war, he enlisted, very young, as a private in the 18th (Public Schools) Bn. Royal Fusiliers—commanded by another old friend and brother officer. With this unit he proceeded to France in 1915, where he was soon gazetted as an officer to the Royal Scots. He served in the Royal Scots in the Dardanelles, Egypt, Mesopotamia, and, finally, for the last two years, with the 1st Bn. in Macedonia. Severely wounded during the brilliant Guevgueli operation of June 1918, he was on recovery posted to me as a liaison officer. Rumania was just then re-entering the war, and proceeding there he

served with General Berthelot, commanding the so-called *Armée du Danube*, and General Prezan, C.-in-C. of the Rumanian Army. Baines's services to Rumania were rewarded by the Order of the Crown. Later in 1919 he rejoined the 1st Royal Scots and was stationed at Tiflis and Kutais in the Caucasus. He resigned his commission about 1920, when I lost sight of him, although he continued to correspond with me. An adept letter-writer, his news kept me in touch with his wanderings, which eventually terminated in New Zealand. He had always, although very limited in practice, been devoted to climbing. His interest in the three Everest expeditions was profound. His last letter to me, received on the very day of his death and dated Wanganui, March 27, 1927, contains the following: ' . . . I did a great tour of the South Island this summer, nearly 3000 miles, and saw much that was very fine. The Milford track is magnificent and the Franz Josef glacier unique. . . . I know, however, nothing finer than the view from my bedroom window of Ruapehu. I have been to the huts there every winter so far, and I can quite honestly say that they have been the best days I have spent out here. Egmont is a fine mountain and I hope to go there next holidays. . . . '

Well, he went, and one of our minor empire-builders and single-minded patriots met his fate. May he rest in peace.—E. L. S.]

REVIEWS.

George Leigh Mallory. A Memoir. By David Pye. Oxford University Press.

THIS is a worthy memorial to a great mountaineer and to a singular and attractive personality. Mallory's life, apart from his mountain climbing, was the not unusual one of a hard-working and cultivated man, strenuous in his profession, with intellectual and artistic interests and many friends. For those who knew him, an intense vitality and a vivid personal charm threw a glamour over all he did. By the world at large he will not be forgotten, owing to the tragic and romantic circumstance of his last mountain campaign.

But this was not the material of which a full-length ' biography ' could be composed ; and Mr. David Pye has, rightly, not attempted it. With impartiality and an excellent sense of proportion he has sketched a very human portrait, omitting what was immaterial, compressing what was usual, and selecting with skill from correspondence, conversation, incident and opinion just so much detail—sometimes only a few words of citation—as might serve to bring the portrait alive.

A man of varied interests, varying moods and irregular if continuous development, George Mallory probably never made quite the same impression upon any two of those who knew him.

Inevitably Mr. Pye's faithful sketch of the Mallory he knew will fail, in the same degree, to correspond with all these different impressions. That is unimportant. He has produced for posterity a veracious and lively picture of a man whose peculiarity it was to appear to others to make every movement, in action, correctly and harmoniously, with supreme and joyous unconcern, but to be desperately concerned mentally—not always with a like success—to arrive at a correct attitude towards the purpose of every action and the meaning of each emotion.

Probably Mallory was completely 'Mallory' only when in full action, leading a successful and where possible a novel and difficult mountain climb. It was only at such moments that the current of personality ran clear and single—undistracted from within, and exceptional in its suggestion of physical and nervous concentration. It is for this reason that we may regret that the memoir does not give us more of such pictures of him, on his great British or Alpine climbs, by those who shared in them. For them we might have been content to sacrifice much of his relationship with intellectual Cambridge. Climbing mountains was the breath of life to him, as well as the finest fashion of living. And yet we gather that some of his Cambridge contemporaries were even unaware that George Mallory was a climber at a time when mountains were already the centre of all that was not derivative in his thought and enthusiasm. Again, the story of the Everest campaigns is told, or is left to tell itself, with admirable restraint and effect. But, necessarily, here the note of endurance, suffering, and coming tragedy predominates. The figure of the man, returning twice to face conditions which 'took any pleasure out of mountaineering' and dangers the extent of which he perhaps alone never underestimated, looms always larger upon the imagination. In reading the last phase, when, with every consideration of domestic happiness and of an honourable career advising him to stay, he yet obeyed the call of a duty he felt to be owing to that which had given him so much in life, the least sympathetic with such a point of view will not be able, I think, to refuse the word 'heroic.' But this is not the atmosphere of joyous ease, of hopeful, confident sunlight, which gave to Mallory's twenty years of mountaineering their peculiar individuality. Sheer love of adventure, indomitable youthfulness—these were the dominant and sustained notes. The purposeful campaigns, the shadow at the end, are not discordant; but they are less characteristic.

Mr. Pye has handled his difficult material with noticeable skill and sureness of touch. He is master of a lucid, pregnant style. He rarely allows himself to express his own opinions or to sum up; but it is enough to read, say, his views on British climbing or the eloquent but restrained paragraph at the close, to know that this, the first memoir of a mountaineer simply as a mountaineer, is worthy of its subject and of our gratitude.

G. W. Y.

Letters of Gertrude Bell. Selected and edited by Lady Bell. 2 vols. Illustrated. Ernest Benn, London, 1927. Price £2 2s.

THIS book consists almost entirely of Miss Bell's letters to her parents. Most of the first volume relates to her travels before the war in the Persia-Arabia region. It ends up by telling us how her intimate knowledge of the people caused Admiral Hall and Dr. Hogarth to get her relieved from her early war work under Lord Cecil in order that she might join Intelligence at Cairo; and how, as soon as the Viceroy hears that she is there, he gets her sent to India, and so on to Basrah. Nearly the whole of the second volume is taken up with her post-war work at Baghdad, where she was Oriental Secretary to the High Commissioner of Iraq. Thus most of the book is confined to the years 1904 to 1926 and to her earlier experiences in Italy, Germany, Persia, and round the world. It would be inappropriate to deal with these matters in the *ALPINE JOURNAL*; especially after the many noble tributes already paid to Miss Gertrude Bell and her work.

What we are concerned with is her play; and, owing to force of circumstances, her play in the Alps was restricted to the years 1897-1904, and so to an all too small part of the book. One cannot help wishing that chance might have led Miss Bell's parents to take her to the Alps before she was twenty-nine. Luckily they did so then; and she made one or two minor expeditions from La Grave. Back she comes at the next opportunity—two years later—and rounds off her first season of serious climbing with Les Écrins and a traverse of La Meije. An unorthodox proceeding of that sort—rather like learning to row on a sliding seat—would be enough to turn any less versatile woman into an inveterate peak-bagger. No peak-bagger could, however, have given us such accounts of her climbs; or shown in almost every sentence that the joy lies in scheming and doing the climb, rather than in having done it: and no one, peak-bagger or no peak-bagger, could have written in such a delightful way, if she had had the least notion that her letters would ever be published.

As one reads them one seems to be following her on another rope; and it is for that reason, more than for any other, that future generations of climbers will revel in them—not because she made a clean sweep of the unclimbed pinnacles of the Engelhörner, or because she makes a famous attempt at a new route up the Finsteraarhorn; but because she makes us feel cold when she feels cold, and thirsty when she feels thirsty, and as if we were nearly 'coming off' when she feels like doing so.

One cannot mention the Finsteraarhorn without referring to the most able and, with one exception, just appreciation of this book in *The Times*. There is no need to say that whoever wrote it has never enjoyed going up a hill; or, in commenting on what is one of the best descriptive essays in mountaineering literature—and that is saying a lot—he would not have suggested that he would have preferred to hear more about Miss Bell—precisely what is not very clear—and less about 'the exact manner of her climbing of the Finsteraarhorn.'

One has to be a Ruskin before one can be permitted to say things like that; and I wonder how many non-climbers will this critic find to agree with him.

I much prefer the criticism of a past-master of English prose, the *doyen* of mountain-exploration. After commenting on Miss Bell's Alpine correspondence, he concludes: 'I find the accounts of the Finsteraarhorn and the Italian side of the Matterhorn the most thrilling things in Alpine adventure . . . because they tell a story and do not aim at an effect.'

I started the book directly after dinner; and yet I felt selfish annoyance when Miss Bell found that some French caravan had filched the tea stowed away at the Schwarzegg. I became inclined to wriggle into some warmer position, and began to think what a long way it was to the Grimsel, when she was suddenly confronted with a second night out in getting off the Finsteraarhorn. Scarcely any other climbing book makes one do things like that; and the fact that this one does greatly increases the debt which many besides mere members of our Club owe to Lady Bell for having kept the letters of her stepdaughter, and for allowing us to have them. She has, for us, cut the climbing part of the book too short, but we willingly forgive her irritating statement that there is at least one more long letter which we might have had; for this statement raises a hope that the Editor may secure it for the JOURNAL,¹ where we should like to read it best of all.

The Art and Sport of Alpine Photography. By Arthur Gardner. Illustrated. H. F. & G. Witherby, London, 1927. Price £1 1s.

IN 'The Art and Sport of Alpine Photography' Mr. Gardner has given us a most readable book, and one that will act as an inspiration and help to all photographers whether they are taking up the hobby as novices or are old hands. Mr. Gardner takes his photography very seriously, and the chief lesson of the book may be expressed in his own words: 'A few really satisfactory pictures are worth far more than a monotonous series of average quality.'

The book is illustrated with some 150 photographs, and every one is a real picture. The writer has never seen a collection of Alpine photographs so good in composition and technique, and practically every one is made to illustrate some definite point in the text. Mr. Gardner does not introduce any technical hints or suggestions, presuming that his reader has mastered the elementary technique of his craft. This is all to the good, but I cannot help feeling that some of his readers would much like to know whether he uses a panchromatic plate and what strength of screen, if any, he employs and whether he makes use of an exposure meter, etc.

The book is divided into four principal chapters. The first is 'Stating the Case,' in which the author dwells on the pleasures of a photographic holiday in the Alps and discusses the best centres and

¹ The letter appears in the present number.—*Editor.*

the advantages of climbing below the snow line rather than on the high peaks if you wish to get the best effects. To the majority of the members of the Alpine Club climbing will always be the first consideration and photography will hold a secondary place, and when one is on the rope with non-photographers on a big expedition the opportunities of taking satisfactory views will be few, if the harmony of the party is to be preserved; but even the most energetic must have some off days, and these can be devoted to serious picture-making. There is no doubt that from the lower peaks by far the most satisfactory pictorial effects can be obtained; a striking example of this point is the beautiful view of the Rosengarten taken from Ciampedie and the Durupi di Larsac from the same view-point, which most of us who have climbed the Rosengarten peaks have, I fear, entirely missed. The second chapter treats of 'Composition and Foregrounds,' and here is a wealth of highly useful hints which will be of the greatest help to the practised photographer as well as to the novice. Special stress is laid on foregrounds, which are really the most important question in the formation of a picture, and the author divides this subject into four sections, dealing first with Water, and here amongst other useful hints the importance of including the near shore of a lake is insisted upon, an omission that is all too frequent in the usual snapshot. Secondly Trees, then Rocks, and finally Ice and Snow are dealt with, and each group is illustrated with a delightful series of pictures. The third chapter is devoted to 'Weather, Lighting and Seasons,' and here it is pointed out that weather conditions which would make high expeditions impossible often give the photographer his best chance of getting really striking effects. 'Mountain Portraits' forms the subject of the final chapter, in which the author describes the sport of selecting a special mountain and obtaining photographs of it from every side and under varied conditions of lighting and weather. The three peaks he selects to illustrate this form of treatment are the Weisshorn, Matterhorn and Mont Blanc, and he gives us a most fascinating series of portraits of these giants from every side and under very varied atmospheric conditions, and suggests the possibility of carrying out this treatment with other less-known peaks. 'The Art and Sport of Alpine Photography' is full of just the sort of helpful hints that the serious photographer wants, and is a valuable addition to photographic literature and a book that every climber who carries a camera will do well to read.

H. R.-S.

*The Experiences of an Explorer.*¹

THE second title of this volume may serve to conceal its main purport. For it is in substance a condensed autobiography of the author. Taken as such it will be found to possess the quality

¹ *The Light of Experience: a Review of Some Men and Events of my Time*, by Sir Francis Younghusband, K.C.S.I., K.C.I.E. London: Constable & Co. 1927.

essential to the success of works of this class. Sir Francis Younghusband's life has been full of various adventure and occupation; it has brought him into contact with many strange places and distinguished men. But it is his ingenuous self-portrait that links his pages together and gives to the volume as a whole a personal interest. The reader follows willingly the intrepid young adventurer across deserts and glaciers, lives with the frontier officer in the remote fastnesses beyond Kashmir, shares his travels as a *Times* correspondent in India or the Cape, or accompanies him in the crowning event of his career, the expedition to Lhasa, which he conducted with so much vigour and success.

Sir Francis was born a traveller. At the age of twenty-two, a young officer in the King's Dragoon Guards, then stationed in India, he succeeded in getting permission to travel on duty for several months in China. Seizing Fortune by the forelock, he took advantage of his leave to carry out a most adventurous journey from Peking to Calcutta, across the Gobi Desert and the Karakoram. His success in this novel and hazardous undertaking proved the first step on the official ladder. Younghusband's interest was now centred on Frontier politics, and he exchanged the Army for the Indian Political Department. In 1889 he was sent on his first political mission, to counteract the Russian advance on the Pamirs and the borders of Afghanistan. His subsequent adventures as Political Resident at Hunza and in the relief of Chitral are dealt with summarily; they have been told at length in previous volumes. In 1894 Lord Curzon, on his travels and acting as a correspondent of *The Times*, joined him in the mountains. Lord Curzon, Younghusband writes, 'was then both a pleasure and a trial.' But in subsequent years he found in him the best of friends. From Simla the Viceroy wrote begging Younghusband to look on him 'not as Viceroy but as an old friend and fellow-traveller.' Sir Francis's comment is shrewd: 'The first part of the injunction was difficult to obey. It would have taken a man with a larger imagination than I have not to look upon Lord Curzon as Viceroy!' In other passages Sir Francis records his warm if by no means uncritical appreciation of his chief. But we hold that he is mistaken in suggesting that it was the influence of Oxford rather than an inborn grain of conscience that created in Curzon that aloofness and self-assertion which hampered him through life. He came to Oxford from Eton 'a very superior person.'

In 1909 Sir Francis finally left India, after enjoying for three and a half years the pleasant post of Resident in Kashmir. On his return he was naturally invited to join the Council of the Royal Geographical Society, of which he was already a Gold Medallist, and in 1914 Mr. Douglas Freshfield, on becoming President, was fortunate in securing Sir Francis's services as one of its Honorary Secretaries. But for the War the attack on Mt. Everest, planned and worked for nine years before by Lord Curzon as Viceroy, but postponed owing to the existing political obstacles in Nepal and

Tibet, would have doubtless been speedily put in hand. It was not till 1921, when Sir Francis had succeeded to the Geographical Presidency, that the long-looked-for effort could be undertaken with the joint support of the Alpine Club and the Geographical Society. Under the auspices of Sir Francis and General Bruce there was no question of the adventure being pushed to the end. Some day we may possibly learn how that end came. At least it has been proved that the highest mountain in the world, the culminating peak of the Chomolungma Group, is not inaccessible to a party of mountaineers provided with adequate transport. That in 1921 the transport proved inadequate was due wholly to bad weather and ill-luck.

On one of his pages Sir Francis writes, 'the exploring spirit was on me.' His readers will probably conclude that it has been on him all his life, urging him to some form of exertion, muscular or mental, political or metaphysical. In his last chapters we are called on to follow him into a new field, beyond even Himalayan heights! Ill satisfied with the stiff Evangelicalism of his early surroundings, he found leisure during his sojourn in the wilds to seek for a broader outlook. Starting with the works of Herbert Spencer, he found little help in 'that dreary old philosopher.' So, on his return to England, he took courage to throw himself at the feet of a famous Cambridge metaphysician. The Professor was interested, and welcomed cordially the man of action who came to him with a singularly open mind. Their intercourse led to Sir Francis joining the Aristotelian Society. He describes with sympathy the participants in its debates. They encouraged him to look forward to the creation of a 'spiritual contribution that will sweeten the life of all mankind.' The nature of this new religion remains undefined. Mountaineers may however, some of them, be able to appreciate Sir Francis's eagerness to follow the gleam of moments of more than mortal vision. But such high matters do not come into the scope of this JOURNAL.

In conclusion we find this an occasion to address a protest, or rather a petition, to publishers. Sir Francis Younghusband has been both a voluminous and a versatile book-writer, and the work under review is in a sense a summary of his earlier contributions to the literature of Travel and Thought. It is a pity no list of them is provided. Publishers are too apt, if they advertise at all the previous publications of an author between the covers of his last book, to advertise only those they have themselves brought out. This practice is an injury to the author, and one that as a reader the critic has frequently cause to resent. D. W. F.

Mes quatre premières années de Montagne. By Jean Coste. Pp. v + 164. Illustrated. Paris, G. Ficker. 1927.

It is always pleasant to read the unedited diary of an enthusiast. This little book should give an hour's delight to any reader. We note that the cost of publication has been defrayed by subscriptions

raised by the friends of the deceased author. M. Paul Helbronner has written a charming preface.

The diary is dedicated: 'pour l'Ubaye, ce pauvre pays si beau dont je suis navré de me voir presque seul à comprendre toute la poésie.' It commences with a boy's adventures, with enthusiastic and equally irresponsible companions, in the stony and desolate glens of the Cottian Alps. The style of writing is spontaneous and delightful; it is one of those narratives of which only a Frenchman is capable. Gradually, as the diary unfolds itself, we perceive a sort of feeling of responsibility attaching itself to the growing technical skill of the writer. The slips and tumbles of his earlier adventures—Le Tourillon—are things of the past. A rope is sometimes taken even if a frayed bit has to be cut off *en plein à pic*! Guides are no longer considered as mere encumbrances and obstructionists. A long ice couloir on Monte Viso gives an insight on new problems for a cragsman (hitherto) pure and simple.

The beauties of névé and glacier are revealed in a descent of Mont Pelvoux by the Glacier des Violettes. The Tête de Moyse followed by three nameless and abrupt Aiguilles give the author a new ascent. Later another difficult tooth (2829 m.) is scaled and is now named Aiguille Jean Coste after its young conqueror. Wonderful days are all these; Jean Coste starts on a bicycle, he pedals for miles, he clammers over numberless clapiers, he turns heads of glens, he climbs his Aiguille and regaining his bicycle late at night sometimes coasts 18 kilometres in 30 minutes to regain his home in the following dawn! The diary was, obviously, never meant for publication. It is all the better for that; glowing descriptions of somewhat dreary scenery, but to the author a dream of beauty and fairyland; adventures reckless, escapes, but through it all an entrancing *joie de vivre*. La Meije claimed a future author as well as mountaineer.

The pity of it all. France cannot spare these splendid boys so willing to sacrifice everything—'pour la Patrie par la Montagne.' Yet they know best and rest content.

A Naturalist in Himalaya. By R. W. G. Kingston, M.C., M.B. A. & F. G. Wittenby.

BEFORE he won distinction as naturalist in the third Mount Everest Expedition, Dr. Kingston had already earned the reputation of a careful and industrious observer of wild life in India. In *A Naturalist in Himalaya* (published in 1920) he describes in detail the observations, mostly of insects, made during a period of two years spent in one of the less known regions of British India. The district of Hazara is a narrow territory lying between Kashmir and the Indus, bounded on the S. by the plains of the Punjab and merging in the N. into the high mountains of Western Kashmir. In its diversity of natural features, its wide range of altitude from a few hundred feet to peaks of 17,000 ft., with the corresponding zones of vegetation, the district forms a sort of compendium of all.

essential features of the Himalaya and affords a wide scope for the patient naturalist. Thousands of British officers and civilians have spent their days of leave in the Himalaya in pursuit of the markhor, the sheep of Marco Polo, the snow leopard and other great trophies of the hills. Few have been content to track the digger-wasp to its lair, to open up the drum of the cicada, or to watch the murderous activities of the glow-worm. The excitement and joy of the chase are the same, whether the quarry be tiger or ant-lion.

Dr. Kingston writes as he speaks, fluently and without reserve. Though the book has no special mountaineering interest, there is much in it to hold the interest of mountaineers, who may be presumed to be all lovers of Nature. The last chapter is a simple sketch of the geological history of the region. The book is illustrated with photographs and drawings and is provided with a sketch map.

Gebirgskrieg. Militärwissenschaftliche und Technische Mitteilungen. September-Oktober, 1927. Illustrated. Pp. 497-672. Vienna. 5s. or 3 mk.

THIS is a highly interesting publication, which should appeal, in spite of its technical character, to all mountaineers. As might be expected, the 'mountain war' dealt with is almost entirely on the Italo-Austrian frontier. There is very little about the Carpathian and nothing on the Balkan operations. It begins with 'Tolmein' (Caporetto), the pursuit of the routed army across the Tagliamento to the Piave, followed by 'the First defence of Monte Grappa'; the 'Advance of the 9th "Mountain" Brigade from Colbricon to Fonzaso.' An extraordinarily instructive chapter follows which can be translated 'Attack by the Valleys or by the Heights?' Next comes the 'Storming of the Hohen Schneid, 3241m., in the Ortler group,' which will probably appeal most to the average mountaineer. This operation, a tiny one with regard to the numbers engaged—a mere trench raid—nevertheless required an intensive preparation of many months. Real fighting and its attendant manœuvres are clearly impossible on glaciers. The last operation described is one on the Rumanian-Transylvanian front, the 'Defence of the Höhe Magura Casinului.'

The remainder of the work is devoted to mountain artillery, fortification, mountain pioneer battalions, machine guns in the mountains, history of 'mountain' troop formations, including the organization and composition of the famous (German) Alpine Corps, the employment of Tanks in mountains [were these ever *really* employed?], aircraft in the mountains, etc.

In these pages, admirably illustrated and with numerous maps and plans, nearly every phase of the most difficult forms of fighting is clearly and concisely described. There is a pleasant lack of bitterness and of the partisan spirit. The student of Suvoroff's Alpine campaigns will find a strong contrast with modern methods. These latter appear to display the remarkable ponderousness and

want of mobility so characteristic of the Isonzo-Trentino fighting, apart from the two great Austro-German attacks.

We should have liked a study of the Franco-Serb assault on the Dobropolje-Sokol heights, followed by another on the immortal Serb pursuit from the Moglenitza to Belgrade. Voïvode Michitch, like Suvoroff, understood true mobility and mountain warfare !

Guide de la Chaîne du Mont Blanc. 3rd edit., with 50 illustrations. By Louis Kurz. Revised by Marcel Kurz. Payot, Neuchâtel, 1927. Price 12 fcs.

THE first edition of this useful guide was published in 1892, and was welcomed as the first of its kind to the finest group in the Alps. The second appeared in 1914, and the present book contains nearly half as much more information and many more route-marked sketches, all re-drawn, without which guide-books are tedious reading. At the present time it is the only recent work of its kind to cover the whole group. It does not profess to give the vast amount of interesting detail presented in the volumes of the well-known Vallot guides, but the information is concise and to the point. It is apparently brought up to 1925.

The book commences with a voluminous bibliography of the group; then follows a list, up to date, of the huts with the approaches carefully described.

The Swiss portion of the chain is treated in great detail, as might be expected in a Swiss book. The Massif du Trient, dear to the Genevois, is neglected by our people, although it offers problems very suitable to the early days of a campaign.

In the Massif du Tour Noir it might be pointed out that the Aig. d'Argentière can be equally well ascended from the couloir at the head of the Glacier du Chardonnet by taking to the arête on the right (ascending) instead of as shown on page 88.

Mr. Oliver's passage of the Col du Tour Noir in 1926, when the time was very considerably reduced ('A.J.' 38), should be noted.

The Mont Dolent comes in for elaborate treatment, M. Marcel Kurz having taken it in charge years ago in his monograph in the *Echo des Alpes*.

It is not correct to state that Mr. Whympers descended *d'un bout d l'autre par le couloir du Col du Mont Dolent*—as frequent use was made of the rocks of the right proper bank.

The interest increases when one reaches the massifs de l'Aiguille Verte, des Grandes Jorasses and des Aiguilles de Chamonix. MM. de Lépiney and Lagarde showed last year that the formidable Col de l'Aiguille Verte can be crossed in certain conditions in very much shorter time than stated on p. 152.

A sketch of the lines of descent from the Grand Dru to the Brèche de the Petit Dru would be welcome.

The note of the Col des Grandes Jorasses is not clear, nor have I ever seen a clear account. It reads (speaking of the S. side): '*s'élever jusqu'au pied du col.*' Where is the *pied*? Actually one ascends right into the couloir which leads to the foot of the narrow,

probably unclimbable ice-filled crack leading to the col itself. One keeps naturally to the right hand or E. side of the couloir close to the bounding wall to avoid possible stonefall. This bounding wall can be ascended at several places—old rope rings will be observed—or one can ascend to within 20 metres of the actual foot of the above narrow crack and then climb the E. bounding wall. It is nowhere easy. From the top of this one is never very far away from, although not in sight of, the narrow crack, and one bears again N. to the col, climbing *en route* a difficult slab in a crack of which is a wooden plug. The descent on the same side is readily made by the use of a doubled rope, and no stones were observed to fall on our descent. Snow and ice on this route may much extend the time.

The Hirondelles arête of the Jorasses is said to have been climbed this summer, but with assistance from above. Particulars have not been published.

The magnificent Rochefort arête seems, of recent years, to be coming into its own.

I do not agree with the sketch route up the N. face of the Géant (p. 208), nor do I follow the description.

Generally speaking, on the N. face one can keep all the way quite close to the left-hand arête—holds magnificent—until one reaches a fairly horizontal *vire* usually carrying some ice. One turns right-handed and follows this for about 30 metres until a broad and easy rock couloir leads to the gap between the two summits. This N. face is really easier than the original Sella-Maquignaz route—the rock is superb.

In route 689 the useful traverse across the face of the Grand Gendarme saving the big *rappel* is not given (*La Montagne*, 1925, p. 335).

I would not call route 740 by the Rochers Rouges dangerous. It is much shorter, especially on the descent—crampons are needed. I am glad to see Brenva route 759 condemned. This year a party wisely choosing the Moore route saw a big avalanche sweep route 759.

The book is sound throughout. M. Marcel Kurz states that he had the advantage of using his father's very careful notes of expeditions made since the 2nd edition.

It can only be improved :

(1) By purchasing it.

(2) By sending to M. Kurz, who will not be hurt, a careful note of any inaccuracies in old, and of any new, routes. The illustrations are good. The weight might have been less and each section should have been complete in itself, so as to be detachable.

J. P. FARRAR.

Carte de la Chaîne du Mont Blanc, 1 : 50,000. Par E. Gaillard. 25 francs.

IN issuing this popular map, which the general public will find useful, the Commandant represents the massif as it appears seen from the Brévent. The topography is brought out in a striking manner by

means of ten superposed colours, and the nomenclature is very complete and up to date, following the orthography based on the rules adopted, on the proposition of the author, by the Service Géog. de l'Armée.

The orientation is oblique like the B.I.K. map, *i.e.* the top of the map is not the N.

From a mountaineer's point of view this oblique orientation is objectionable, as many of us who have had to refer to a map in bad weather will know.

Contour lines are absent, but its clear, bold design, which does not pretend to supply close topographical details, will commend the map to the majority of visitors to the finest group of mountains in Europe.

J. P. F.

Through Tibet to Everest. By Captain J. B. L. Noel. Pp. 298. Illustrated. Arnold & Co. London, 1927. Price 10s. 6d.

THERE are three official volumes on the story of Mount Everest. These large, well-illustrated and well-written books have been admirably compressed into a single volume—*The Epic of Everest*—by Sir Francis Younghusband. The purpose filled by the book under review is difficult to describe. For the sum of three shillings more than Sir F. Younghusband's book, the reader is provided with a chatty narrative, some extremely indifferent illustrations, and no map.

Captain Noel, official photographer to the 1922 expedition and a semi-official, cinematographic free-lance in 1924, is a traveller who, modestly, lays no claim to be a mountaineer. If he had been content to terminate his volume with the end of Part I we could have given him a modicum of praise, especially as no account of Captain Noel's solitary wanderings in Tibet has appeared, except in the *Geographical Journal*, we believe.

The book claims to be written from 'the human point of view.' If so, humanity must be in a sad state. The descriptions of the members of the Expeditions are neither sympathetic nor in good taste, the conversations between them savour of the 'titles' of an American film, and George Mallory, who, with Somervell and Finch, is the central figure in the drama, never uttered, although he may have written, the remarks attributed to him. There was infinite attraction in all that Mallory did; there was never anything theatrical in what he said, least of all in his three Odysseys to the Himalaya. The portrait on p. 214, stated to be that of Mallory, is one of the grossest caricatures in modern 'art.' The 'last letter,' illustrated on the same page, is interesting because there are two others in the Alpine Club, both addressed to Odell. The picture facing p. 268 represents no mountain in the world.

Few of us can appreciate a chapter entitled 'Combat! Achievement! Repulse!' This is hardly fit even for the screen and is on a

par with the 'sob-stuff' names, coined, we believe, at the Scala, of 'Snow Field' Camp, 'Frozen Lake' Camp, 'Ice Cliff' Camp, 'Citadel,' 'Eagles' Nest,' 'Windy Ridge' Camp. The camps on the mountain are known to the members of the Expeditions—and to the world—solely by numbers, 1 to 6, starting from above the Base. If names had been given they would have been Tibetan.

There are many careless inaccuracies. The guides who accompanied the Abruzzi Expedition were the Brocherel brothers and Petigax; the 'error' of Mallory in 1921 in not visiting the outlet of the E. Rongbuk Glacier did not cause the loss of a day, hardly of an hour, to the 1922 party; the explorers of that glacier did *not* sleep out in the open, neither did they exhaust themselves and their porters; the Christian name of Strutt is not 'Frank'; there is no such person as Lord Salveson, and 'Gurkha' is invariably misspelt. The idea of remaining in Tibet and of making an attempt on the mountain after the monsoon was never entertained by the Leaders on the spot. The question of sending a relief party from England in the autumn of 1922 was given up as impracticable. The porters were *not* Darjeeling 'bazaar coolies,' they were hill-men who came from great distances specially to compete in General Bruce's exhaustive selection; the idea of recruiting more efficient porters on the way through Tibet is simply absurd. There are no superiors—probably no equals—to the gallant 'coolies' of the three Mount Everest Expeditions.

Captain Noel was a good organizer for his part in the Expeditions. We turn to the appendix for his suggestions. Here are some of them:

(A) 'Collect an Olympic team of fine young men who represent the manhood of the world and send them equipped with modern scientific appliances and devices. Let them not attack nor assault Everest, but let them *walk up*¹ the mountain and prove its conquest without loss, injury or suffering to themselves. It would be a victory for modern man. . . . I am positive it could be done with correct organization and method.'

(B) Construct 'weather-proof huts' and have the Base installed at No. 1 Camp; construct ply-wood huts and mount them at No. 4 [23,200 ft.].

(C) Build a yak road to No. 1.

(D) Have nothing but animal transport from the Base to No. 3 Camp [21,000 ft.]; in other words, train yaks to march over ice, séracs and, finally, crevassed névé.

(E) Provide a *Téléférique* from No. 3 to No. 4 Camp [North Col] to carry stores of 50 lbs. weight.

(F) Install W.T. stations to connect with India and the various camps [the one reasonable suggestion and a plan which, together with telephones, might have been adopted in 1924].

¹ *Italics* in the text.

(G) Provide a 'white man cook' for the Expedition.

Shades of Daudet and Albert Smith!

The book is written to 'popularize' the Chomolungma range. This is, perhaps, as worthy a motive as a film (the taking of which is described on pp. 245-7) purporting to represent the deathless rescue of the marooned porters. This, as shown in London, took place in brilliant weather, or so it appeared to the audience. But, for ourselves, we have no use for gallery-play, nor for a cinema, nor for 'special pictorial postage stamps' on the Throne of the Himalaya.

The scandalous episode of the Lamas brought to England in connection with the film, and with which the Expedition and the Mount Everest Committee were absolutely unconnected, is, we understand, largely responsible for present relations with Lhasa. It is mere justice to remember that the sale of the film rights to Captain Noel relieved the guarantors of the 1924 expedition from all liability. We can only regret that he has failed to realize his own liabilities as regards both the book and the film.

The *envoi* is in keeping with the rest. 'Will Everest be climbed? Of course it will. Why, some day man will fly to the top of Everest and walk down breathing liquid oxygen gas. The world is owned by man. Man has infinite capacity within himself.'

Absit omen.

Switzerland Calling. By E. W. Jackson. London, 1927.

FRESHLY and pleasantly written and original in being the first book of its kind, a climbing book by a young climber. Considerable powers of observation are evident, and the writing is easy. The title is certainly up to date, being taken from wireless. There is youthful freshness in the remark on the Morteratsch climb, 'There was a divine chimney which was splendid fun scrambling up,' and there is wisdom in a later remark, 'All these things seem trivial, but the big things only come seldom.' And finally the true spirit of mountaineering comes out, 'You will understand why I dream and dream again of the glorious mountains.' All most excellent for seventeen.

Caravans and Cannibals. By Mary H. Bradley. London, 1927.

THIS volume is a record of a tour round Ruwenzori. Writers of papers on travel or mountaineering who read this work will get valuable suggestions as to method. Avoiding all endeavour to teach facts, the authoress takes the reader with her on the journey and by the ease and the detailed interest she feels in men, animals and scenery—expressed in just the right words—enables him to see and to feel more than he would have done had he himself taken the trip. This absence of the guide-book style and of the informative teacher is rare in modern works of travel. Early papers in this JOURNAL and elsewhere owe the pleasure they give the reader largely to a similar quality of well-informed simple directness in the writing.

THE ALPINE CLUB LIBRARY.

The following additions have been made to the Library :—

Club Publications.

- Appalachian Mountain Club.** Register for 1927. $7\frac{1}{2} \times 5\frac{1}{4}$: pp. 131.
C.A.F. Isère. Circulaire trimestrielle. 2me année, no. 3. $8\frac{1}{2} \times 5\frac{1}{2}$: pp. 12.
 Avril 1927
C.A.I. Napoli. Bollettino mensile. Anni 5 e 6. $9\frac{3}{4} \times 6\frac{3}{4}$. 1926-7
 — **Staz. Univers.** Monti d'Italia, Val Masino. 15 Cartoline. 1926
 — **Torino.** Annuario 1926. 10×7 : pp. 117.
 History of Soc. alp. ragazzi ital., Gruppo femm. d. Sezione, C.A. Accademico
 ital.
D.u.Oe.A.-V. Kassel. Festschrift zur Feier ihres 40 jährigen Bestehens.
 $10\frac{1}{2} \times 7\frac{1}{2}$: pp. 41: plates. 1926
Deutscher Gebirgsverein. Jahrbuch. 37. Jahrgang. 9×6 : pp. 203: ill. 1927
Harvard Mountaineering Club. Harvard mountaineering. Vol. 1, No. 1.
 9×6 : pp. 32: plates. Cambridge, Mass., 1927
 The Club was founded in 1924. Active membership is limited to those who
 have had some real mountaineering experience.
 Contains: Mt. Clearwater: Mt. Moran and Tetons: Lyell Pks and Mt.
 Forbes: Dolomite climbing.
Den Norske Turistforenings Arbok. $9\frac{1}{4} \times 6\frac{3}{4}$: pp. 258: plates. 1927
 Contains: 50-ausdagen fro St. Skagaselstinds førstebestigning.
 — Handbok. $6\frac{3}{4} \times 5\frac{1}{4}$: pp. 81. 1927
S.A.C. Taschen-Kalender 1927. XX. Jahrgang. 6×4 : pp. (xii), 32: plates.
 — **Basel.** Jahresbericht für 1926. 9×6 : pp. 74: portraits.
 Portraits of Emil Burckhardt, Hans Grass and Peter Egger: In mem.
 Dr. Emil Burckhardt.
 — **Uto.** Der Uto, Nachrichten. 5. Jahrgang. 9×6 : ill. 1927
Ski-Club of Great Britain. Ski Notes and Queries. Vol. 3, no. 32. $8\frac{1}{2} \times 5\frac{1}{2}$:
 pp. 235-80: plates. May 1927

New Books.

- Allen, W. E. D.** New political boundaries of the Caucasus. In Geogr. Journ.,
 London, vol. 69, no. 5. $9\frac{3}{4} \times 6\frac{1}{4}$: pp. 430-41: map. May 1927
De Amicis, Ugo. Alpe mistica. $7\frac{1}{2} \times 5$: pp. 311.
 Milano, Trèves, 1926. L. 10
 Page 243:

‘ Bisogna fissare lo sguardo in alto, a lungo e con buona volontà; a lungo e con tutto
 l'affetto del tuo cuore; allora soltanto potrai leggere quella parola, speranza. E bisogna
 riuscire a leggerla! Perché, se non la leggi di lassù, dalla cima di una montagna in
 una giornata serena, ben difficilmente la potrai leggere ancora quando serai sceso al piano.’

- Armandy, André.** Terre de Suspicion. Roman d'aventures.
 Paris, Tallandier, 1926
Bollettino del Comitato glaciologico italiano. N. 7. 10×7 : pp. 166: ill.
 Torino, 1927
 U. Monterin, Variazioni dei ghiacciai italiani, 1925-6: A. Roccati, I
 ghiacciai delle alpi marittime orientali, 1921-4: F. Sacco, Gruppo d. Monviso:
 G. Nangeroni, Valtournanche: U. Monterin, Osservatorio del Col d'Olen.
Bordeaux, Henri. Les Jeux dangereux. $7\frac{1}{2} \times 4\frac{3}{4}$: pp. 287.
 Paris, Plon, 1926
 Sports d'hiver, Villa d. Neiges, Feu à Mürren, Courses de Mürren, etc.

Bradley, Mary H. Caravans and Cannibals. A hunting trip round Ruwenzori. London, 1927

Page 25: 'A few moments later we saw [from near Portal]—off to the left—a great mountain range against the sky, the tops veiled in cloud.

" 'Sir Samuel Baker was the first European to see the Ruwenzori; he and his wife saw "the blue mountains to the south" during his exploration of Lake Albert in 1864, but it was not until 20 years later, when Stanley came, that the high snows were discovered, and for 20 years after that they remained as unknown and mysterious as ever—cold, untrodden heights glittering under a tropic sun.'

Page 95: '[near Bungulu] We had a magnificent view of the Ruwenzori mountains above the nearer hills. We could see the entire range, fifty miles long, with soaring peaks, where the glittering snow lay softly as a cloud against the burning sky. Night and morning those high peaks stood out in crystal clearness and the sunset that burned behind us threw magic colour over the serrated sides and changing drifts. It was a marvellous country. East and south the Ruwenzori and below us a dark sea of equatorial forest stretching on and on, with here and there the vivid green of a meadow.'

Bruère, P. La métaldéhyde comprimée ou charbon blanc. In Ann. d. falsifications, Paris, no. 206. $9\frac{1}{2} \times 6\frac{1}{4}$: pp. 70-3. Février 1926

See note under R. Villers.

Buxton, Harold. Trans-Caucasia. $7 \times 4\frac{3}{4}$: pp. x, 99: ill. London, Faith Press (1926). 3s.

A short history and account of present conditions.

Cadisch, Jos. Der Bau der Schweizeralpen. $9\frac{1}{2} \times 6\frac{1}{2}$: pp. 61: ill. Zürich, Orell Füssli, 1926

Carr, Herbert R. C. A climbers' guide to Snowdon and the Beddgelert district. Issued by the Climbers' Club. $6 \times 4\frac{3}{4}$: pp. 143: plates, map. London, Burrup, 1926

Chamonix. Musée de Chamonix. Catalogue Descriptif illustré. $6\frac{3}{4} \times 4\frac{1}{2}$: pp. 57: ill. (Loches, Daigremont, 1927)

Pp. 27-37, Objets relatifs à l'histoire de l'alpinisme.

Cooper, Courtney Ryley. High country. The Rockies yesterday and to-day. $8\frac{1}{4} \times 5$: pp. x, 294: plates. Boston, Little Brown & Co., 1926

An account of former mining life and to-day's motor camps.

Coste, Jean. Mes quatre premières années de montagne. Préface de Paul Helbronner. $7\frac{1}{2} \times 5\frac{3}{4}$: pp. v, 167. Paris, Ficker, 1927

Pas de la Cavale, Gr. Rubren, Brec de Chambeyron, Pain de Sucre, Pelvoux, Viso, Tête de Moyse, Gr. Bérard, etc. Among first ascents by the author were Aigs. d'Oronaye, Tête de Cuguret, Tête de Moyse, Aig. Pierre André, Aig. de Chambeyron.

Czant, Hermann. Alpinismus Massentouristik, Massenskilauf, Wintersport, Militär-alpinistik und die 9700 Kilometer Gebirgsfronten im Weltkrieg. $10\frac{1}{2} \times 6\frac{3}{4}$: pp. 366: ill. Berlin, Verlag f. Kulturpolitik, Berlin, 1926

Bedeutung d. Alpinismus usw. für die Gebirgsfronten: Details aus den Gebirgsfronten: Gebirgsfrontaktionen: Militärtechnische Prinzipien: Alpin-technische Momente f. Gibrigsfronten.

Dainelli, Giotto. Olinto Marinelli e la sua opera geografica. Commemorazione tenuta il 14 dicembre 1926. $12 \times 8\frac{1}{4}$: pp. 42: portr. Udine, Doretta, 1927

Contains bibliography of articles, etc., mostly alpine, 475 items.

David-Neel, Alexandra. My journey to Lhasa. The Personal Story of the only White Woman who succeeded in entering the Forbidden City. $8\frac{3}{4} \times 5\frac{1}{4}$: pp. xviii, 310: plates. London, Heinemann (1927)

Egger, Karl. Vorübergang. 8×5 : pp. 128. Zürich, Orell Füssli, 1927

A novel of mountaineering and disaster.

Featherstone, B. K. An Unexplored Pass. A Narrative of a Thousand-mile Journey to the Kara-koram Himalayas. 9×6 : pp. 249: map, plates. London, Hutchinson (1926)

Fehrmann, Rudolf. Der Bergsteiger im Sächsischen Felsengebirge. Führer durch die Kletterfelsen des Elbsandsteingebirges. $6\frac{1}{2} \times 4$: pp. 61: ill.

Nachtrag, 1927. Dresden, Volkman, 1927

- Fels and Firn.** Ein Jahrbuch für Alpinismus Forschungsreise und Wanderung. Geleitet von Jos. Jul. Schätz und Alfred Graber. 12 × 9: pp. (iv), 192: plates, some col. München, Rother, 1925
- Short papers on climbs, including G. I. Finch, East face Mte Rosa : C. R. v. Overkamp, Hochblassen, 1921 : K. Hofmann, Hochgall first ascent, 1868 : H. Barth, Guglia in die Brenta : Grossvenediger first ascent, 1841.
- Forstmann, Carl.** Himatschal. Die Throne der Götter, 25 Jahre im Himalaya. 9 × 6: pp. 432: maps, plates. Berlin, Scherl (1926). M. 12
- Travels in Sikkim with descriptions of art, religion, etc.
- Gardner, Arthur.** The art and sport of alpine photography. 8½ × 5½: pp. xvi, 224: 150 plates. London, Witherby, 1927. 21s.
- Gos, François.** Rambles in High Savoy. 9½ × 6½: pp. 169: plates. London, Longmans, Green, 1927
- Presented by Mr. Wm. Bellows.
- Haas, Rudolf.** Die Stimme des Berges. Novelle. 8½ × 5½: pp. 84. München, Rother, 1924
- The German type used for this is remarkably clear and beautiful.
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- Henry, Abbé.** Alpinisme. 6¾ × 4¾: pp. 70: ill. Editions 'Augusta Praetoria,' Aoste, 1925
- Hingston, R. W. G.** A naturalist in Himalaya. 8¾ × 5¾: pp. xii, 300: plates. London, Witherby, 1920
- Huber, Sepp.** Führer durch die Tote Gebirge entschliesslich Warscheneck, Höllengebirge und Sengengebirge. 6½ × 4½: pp. 156: ill. Wien, Artaria, 1927
- Humphreys, G. N.** New routes on Ruwenzori. In Geogr. Journ., London, vol. 69, no. 6. 9¾ × 6¼: pp. 516–31: ill. June 1927
- Jackson, Eileen Montague** ('Miss Tarzan'). Switzerland calling. A true tale of a boy and girl's wonderful summer holidays climbing in the Alps. 8¼ × 5¾: pp. (vi), 238: plates. London, Black, 1927. 5s.
- Climbs: Allalinhorn, Piz Moretratsch, Drei Schwestern, Piz Albris, Breithorn, Matterhorn, etc. The authoress is 17 years old this year and has gone to Switzerland since 1922.
- Kober, Leopold.** Ueber Bau und Entstehung der Alpen. In Forschungen u. Fortschritte, Berlin. 11¾ × 8¼: pp. 155. 1. Okt. 1926
- Lloyd, R. W.** A traverse of the Dent Blanche and the first direct ascent of the Aiguille de Bionnassay by the north face (read before the Rucksack Club) and first direct ascent of the Aiguille de Bionnassay by the north face (read before the Alpine Club). 9¾ × 5½: pp. 16; 10 plates (2 col.). London, Spottiswoode, 1927
- Loewe, Fritz.** Der Hand der bergsteigerischen Erschliessung der aussereuropäischen Gebirge. 11½ × 9: pp. 9. Berlin, 1927
- A bibliography arranged geographically.
- Macgregor, Alasdair Alpin.** Over the Sea to Skye, or Ramblings in an Elfin Isle. 7½ × 5: pp. xxiv, 353: plates. London, Chambers, [1926]
- Mettrier, Henri.** La torrentialité dans la Vallée de Peisey. Ex Bull. Sect. de géogr. 9¾ × 6¾: pp. 54. Paris, Impr. nat. 1925
- Morley, John.** Early life and letters. London, Macmillan, 1927
- Vol. i. p. 228, letter to Frederic Harrison :

'December 15, 1872. On a Sunday afternoon. Never was a landscape so grey and detestable, and it is made worse by the accident that I am writing about on the Isle of St. Peter in the Lake of Bienna, where I had a glorious day last July. I notice this by the way, that Rousseau omits to mention the fact that from the island you have a most superb view of the mountains of the Bernese Oberland, or at least dismisses them in two words, "montagnes bleuâtres": yet there is not one of your pedants of the Alpine Club—from the sensible and social and civic you, and the cynical anti-enthusiastic Stephen—who would not have revelled in giving us a string of uncouth names, heights, ascents, and only the god of mountain, cloud, and human pedantry knows what besides. Yet Rousseau really loved nature, while the Alpine Club takes her as a pick-me-up after the exhausting imbecilities of the London season; or as a concentrated tonic, bearing them up against the future fatigue of writing articles for the "Saturday," or scraping up guineas in Lincoln's Inn. Oh, how I despise Alpine Cant.'

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A novel of climbing, etc., on the Himalaya.
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- Die Ostalpen.** Bl. 12, 18. Rosengartenspitze, Kl. Zinne.
- Pereira, George.** Peking to Lhasa . . . compiled by Sir Francis Younghusband from notes and diaries supplied by Cecil Pereira. $8\frac{3}{4} \times 5\frac{1}{2}$: pp. x, 287: plates. London, Constable, 1925
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- Storia, Alpinismo moderna: I monti, Il clima: L'uomo sugli alti monti: Educazione dell' alpinista: Alimentazione: Equipaggiamento: Ricoveri: Guide: Alpinisti e comitive: Orientamento: Tecnica alpinistica: Pericoli: Segnali di soccorso: Gli infortuni: Soccorsi.
- Purtscheller, Ludwig, und Heinrich Hess.** Der Hochtourist in den Ostalpen. 5. Aufl. von Hanns Barth. 3. Bd. Nördliche Ostalpen von der Salzbach bis zum Wiener Becken. 6×4 : pp. 272: maps, ill. Leipzig, Bibl. Instit., 1927
- Pye, David.** George Leigh Mallory. A Memoir. $8 \times 5\frac{1}{2}$: pp. (viii), 183: portraits, plates. Oxford University Press, 1927
- Reynolds, J. R.** Iceland in 1872 and 1926. In Geogr. Journ., London, vol. 70, no. 1. 9×6 : pp. 44-50: ill. July 1927
- Sacco, F.** Guglie alpine del Piemonte. Ex Pro Piemonte. $9\frac{1}{2} \times 6\frac{3}{4}$: pp. 12: ill. Torino, Checchini, 1926
- Il glacialismo nel Gruppo del Monviso. Ex Boll. glac. ital. no. 7. $10\frac{1}{2} \times 7$: pp. 58-93: map. 1927
- Il Dente del Gigante. Ex Flore Valdotaïne. $9\frac{3}{4} \times 6\frac{3}{4}$: pp. 10: ill. Aosta, Soc. Edit. vald., 1927
- Specchi alpini. Ex Pro Piemonte. $9\frac{1}{2} \times 6\frac{3}{4}$: pp. 10: ill. Luglio—Dicembre, 1926
- Il glacialismo nella Valle d'Aosta. Ufficio idrografico del Po, Parma. 10×7 : pp. 67: map. Torino, Checchini, 1927
- Schmieder, Oscar.** The east Bolivian Andes, south of the Rio Grande or Guapay. Univ. of California Publications in Geography, vol. 2, no. 5. 11×7 : pp. 85-165: map, plates. Berkeley, 1926
- Serand topo-guides.** Mont Veyrier. Massif de la Tournette. Pointe-Percée. $6\frac{1}{2} \times 4\frac{1}{4}$: pp. 31, 48, 32: maps. Annécy, Merle, 1926. 4.50 fr. each
- Skrine, C. P.** Chinese Central Asia. $8\frac{3}{4} \times 5\frac{1}{2}$: pp. xvi, 306: map, plates. London, Methuen, 1926
- Switzerland.** Health resorts of Switzerland. Edited under the supervision of the Swiss Soc. for Balneology and Climatology. 3rd ed. $7\frac{1}{2} \times 5$: pp. 164: plates. Zurich, Wagner, 1926
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- Villers, R.** Le charbon blanc ou méta. In La Nature, no. 2540. $11\frac{3}{4} \times 8$: pp. 373-5. 9 Déc. 1922
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Items.

- Jahn, Gustav.** Frühling auf der Rax. A large coloured picture, 22×30 , printed by Angerer and Göschl, Wien.
- Map.** Carte géologique du massif du Mont-Blanc à l'échelle du 1/20.000^e par MM. Paul Corbin et Nicolas Oulianoff. Feuille Servoz—Les Houches. Notice explicative. $8\frac{1}{2} \times 5\frac{1}{2}$: pp. 26. Paris, Barrère, 1927
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- Mount Logan district. Routes marked.
- Newspaper cuttings.** A valuable collection of cuttings made by the late Henry Wagner, 1862–1886. Presented by Mr. Orlando Wagner.

CORRESPONDENCE.

A DEFENCE OF SKI-RUNNERS.

To the Editor of the ALPINE JOURNAL.

SIR,—The article on Alpine accidents in the last issue of the ALPINE JOURNAL contains some severe strictures on British ski-runners. These criticisms might safely be ignored had they appeared in any less influential journal. My object in replying in some detail is not controversy, but conversion. I believe that mountaineers and ski-runners have everything to gain by friendly co-operation, and this letter is written in the hope of eliciting a little more sympathy and a little more understanding of our peculiar problems from the heirs to a great tradition.

I must begin with a reply to a purely personal criticism. Your contributor writes as follows :

‘The British and other Ski Clubs issue sensible advice and warnings, but the toll of accidents appears to qualify considerably the statement by a great ski authority that :

“ . . . the ski-runner . . . may claim with justice to be a specialist in one important branch of mountaineering, for he has contributed far more than the foot climber to the science of snow-craft. Snow-craft was, indeed, a rudimentary science until ski-runners began to climb. Guides, like *Christian Almer*,¹ who were credited by their employers with possessing an infallible knowledge of snow conditions, made the most elementary blunders, blunders that a ski-runner who had crossed no pass higher than the Scheidegg would instinctively avoid. . . . Even the most casual of ski-runners interested only in tests and races soon picks up more snow-craft than is within the knowledge of the average mountaineer.”²

‘It is hard to estimate the baneful influence caused by remarks such as these, but, *si monumentum requiris, circumspice.*’

The passage quoted with such disapproval by your contributor is taken from a ‘History of Ski-ing and Winter Mountaineering’ which has been appearing serially in the *British Ski Year Book*. Proofs of this History were sent to an exceptionally large number of distinguished mountaineers, British and Alpine. The remarks quoted by your contributor were not challenged until the *British Ski Year Book* actually appeared. The present Editor of the ALPINE JOURNAL criticized the reference to Almer, and I at once replied that I would omit it when the articles appeared in book

¹ ‘The italics are our own.—A.J.’

² ‘*British Ski Year Book*, 1926, p. 613.’

form. The phrasing of one sentence quoted by the 'A. J.' was needlessly aggressive and I was glad to have my attention drawn to it. I am not attempting to saddle proof-readers with responsibility for my views, and I wish to acknowledge, with all possible sincerity of thanks, the kind and valuable assistance of the late and present Editors of the *ALPINE JOURNAL* in reading the proofs of these particular chapters. Had I not been guided by their criticisms, I should have been better prepared for trouble. It is, however, a little trying to be publicly censured for a passage which one has agreed to withdraw.

But though I was prepared to withdraw this passage, I am not prepared, now that it has been challenged, to admit that it was incorrect. The theme of your contributor is the foolishness of ski-runners. Ski-runners may be foolish, but I have yet to meet a ski-runner who would not instinctively recognize that of all paths, safe in summer, but dangerous in winter, the path to the Bäregg Inn is perhaps the most dangerous. A lecturer on avalanches could not cite a more perfect text-book example to illustrate the classic features of avalanche country. Those who follow this path in winter are not only liable to be overwhelmed by avalanches from above, but they also run a grave risk of starting an avalanche; for the path crosses steep slopes deprived of their natural support and left hanging above a vertical cliff below; of all types of slopes the most dangerous.

On January 20, 1874, Mr. Coolidge, led by Christian Almer, left Grindelwald for the Bergli hut, and followed the ordinary path to the Bäregg.³ The entire party only just missed being overwhelmed by an enormous avalanche composed chiefly 'of snow which had been loosened on the upper portions of the Mettenberg by the previous day's rain.' Directly after arriving at the Bäregg another enormous avalanche fell across the path, 'utterly obliterating our footsteps.' A few years later Mr. Coolidge was actually caught in an avalanche on the path between the Bäregg and the Bänisegg. He 'luckily escaped with the loss of an ice-axe and a pair of spectacles.'⁴ After these three escapes the route via the Bäregg was at last abandoned by Almer in favour of the safe and obvious route on the true left-hand side of the glacier, which has since been invariably followed by winter mountaineers and ski-runners.

As a small boy, I regarded Christian Almer with the reverence which small boys yield to their heroes, and I have lost none of my respect for one of the greatest guides in Alpine history. Christian Almer will always be remembered as the pioneer of winter mountaineering, but like other pioneers he made mistakes. Surely it is not impious to suggest that snow-craft no less than rock-craft has developed since the eighties. Facts are stubborn things, and your contributor cannot dispose of the facts I have mentioned by printing

³ *Alpine Studies*, p. 110.

⁴ *Ibid.* p. 117.

Christian Almer's name in italics. It is easy to imagine the strictures which the ALPINE JOURNAL would pass on a ski-runner who followed Almer's route in winter up to the Bäregg Inn. Nor am I prepared to modify my belief that the average ski-runner picks up more snow-craft than the average mountaineer. I use the words 'average mountaineer' and not 'the average member of the Alpine Club' as I have specifically excluded experts from this comparison.

By an average mountaineer, I mean a man who has climbed for two or three seasons between guides. Such a man will discover that snow is usually hard in the morning and soft in the afternoon. He may once or twice observe that his guides are muttering doubts as to the stability of a particular snow slope. But the chances are that at the end of his third season he will know little more about snow than when he began, though his skill on rocks and his balance on ice will probably have improved out of all recognition. The expert, of course, who aspires to lead or at least to influence the decisions of his party must study avalanche conditions in summer, which are fortunately far less complex than avalanche conditions in winter or spring.

Now consider the ski-runner. He spends his first few days on the practice slopes, then starts forth for his first small run. Before he has been ski-ing for many minutes he will discover that the snow, which to his untrained eye appears a uniform monotonous surface, is full of treacherous surprises. He runs from powder snow into breakable crust and pitches violently on to his head, from powder snow into unbreakable crust and sits down heavily on his tail. If he wishes to maintain an approximately vertical, rather than an intermittently horizontal position, he is forced to study the ever-changing humours of the snow. He is impressed from the first not only by the importance of avoiding falls but also by the danger of avalanches. The ski-runner is indeed haunted by the avalanche menace, and it is this constant pre-occupation which is responsible for the comparatively small number of fatal accidents.

Few people bother their heads with useless knowledge. Why should the mountaineer concern himself with all those subtle changes in speed and texture which are meaningless to the man on foot, but full of significance to the man on ski. Is it surprising that the ski-runner, alone, should have mastered the gamut of snow values due to the intricate interplay of sun, wind and storm? 'The ski-runner,' writes Dr. Jenny, 'must know more about snow than the summer mountaineer.' Dr. Jenny, the Editor of the *Swiss Alpine Club Journal*, is certainly no bigoted partisan of the ski-runner, but he realizes that snow-craft is the especial domain of the ski mountaineer. The reader who doubts the complexity of snow-craft as studied by the ski-runner could do worse than glance through the examination paper on snow-craft which is printed in the current issue of the *British Ski Year Book*. We ski-runners are proud of our contribution to the great science of mountain-craft. Since

ski-ing was introduced into Central Europe, very little has been written about avalanches excepting by ski-runners. Our present knowledge about avalanches is due in the main to ski-runners such as Paulcke, Hoek, Bilgeri, Rickmers and Marcel Kurz. Among our own people, the study of winter and spring snow conditions has been the work of ski-runners.

Surely the Alpine Club should be the first to give credit where credit is due, and to recognize in no ungenerous spirit the contribution which the ski-runner has made to the sum-total of our mountaineering knowledge.

I have tried to justify the remarks quoted by your contributor not because I am unduly sensitive to criticism, but because a larger issue is involved. I should not have replied to a purely personal criticism lest I might appear ungrateful to the *ALPINE JOURNAL* which has always reviewed my books with great kindness, and which paid a signal compliment to that last issue of the *British Ski Year Book*, and indeed, to the very article which is now the subject of censure.

I do not think I am mistaken in assuming that the reference to sports known as 'Slaloms' in your last issue indicates a certain contempt for the ski race in general and the Slalom in particular. Let me quote the relevant passage :

'British expert ski-runners mostly spend their time in sports known as "slaloms" while the non-experts slide about on slopes, trodden to adamant hardness, at the back of hotels. Yet both kinds often start for an expedition immediately after or during a fall of fresh snow. . . . Many more accidents may occur before these young skiers learn the rudiments of winter mountaineering. The pioneers waited for days, even weeks, before the conditions appeared safe ; these later-day "experts" wait hours, sometimes not even that.'

First as to Slaloms. Your contributor is misinformed. It is only a minority of British experts who race, and even this minority does not concentrate on the Slalom. The downhill race still holds its pride of place ; for there are three downhill races to every Slalom race.

What is a Slalom race ? It is a race down a course defined by flags which are placed so as to test the ski-runner's mastery of the turns. The Slalom is a fine test of control, and, as such, might be expected to appeal to the mountaineer. The man who has been through the Slalom school is a safer companion when ski-ing on a rope than the man who has concentrated exclusively on high speed. The modern Slalom has been developed by the British. The Swiss Universities Ski Club honoured us by adopting our Slalom rules and by awarding their Championship, as we do, on the combined result of a downhill race and a Slalom race. Our view is that the downhill race is the best test of dash, balance and courage, but that the Slalom is the supreme test of control and technique. We regard

these two races as complementary, and consider that a champion should excel in both. Our view is finding support on the Continent, especially among Swiss, German and Austrian students. Our instructions for setting a Slalom course have been reprinted in Canadian and American ski-ing journals, with the result that Slalom races have been successfully held on the American continent. This appears to me to be a legitimate matter for congratulation.

British ski-runners hope to be represented in future at the Winter Olympic Games. If we compete, we may as well not disgrace ourselves, and if we hope for success some of our young men must specialize in racing. Handicapped as we are by small numbers and lack of opportunity, we may well be proud of the modest successes that we have so far secured in international ski-ing competitions. At a time when other countries are beating us in games which we taught them to play, it is a matter for legitimate satisfaction that in ski-ing, to us an alien sport, we are beginning to hold our own. The British Universities Team beat the Swiss Universities Team in 1926, and our representatives also did extremely well in the International Universities Meeting at St. Moritz and Wengen. Mountaineers who never ski will, I am sure, feel a certain satisfaction in the successes of those who are their own countrymen.

I do not write as a racer, for I have neither the courage nor the skill to excel in racing. My own primary interest is in ski mountaineering; but I do not feel it essential to belittle one form of sport because I happen to prefer another form, and I confess my unstinted admiration for those who have proved their mastery in a virile and exacting branch of ski-ing.

According to your contributor, British experts mostly confine themselves to Slaloms, and the non-experts to playing about on the practice slopes.

I refer your contributor to the back numbers of the *British Ski Year Book*; for I do not propose to waste space in dealing with this wild travesty of the facts as far as Slaloms and practice slopes are concerned. Indeed, your contributor tacitly admits his inconsistency when he condemns ski-runners for leaving the practice slopes too soon, and for invading too rashly the preserves of the mountaineer. The gravamen of his charge is, indeed, that ski-runners enter the danger zone without due experience, due preparation, and without expert leadership. This charge is worth meeting. The other charge is not.

I admit, of course, that the danger zone is far lower in winter than in summer. The Faulhorn is often as dangerous in January as Mont Blanc in July. Mountain-craft indeed begins in winter when one puts on ski. British ski-runners seldom employ guides except on the glaciers, and might therefore be described as guideless mountaineers, if we admit, as we must, the contention that small mountains in winter call for mountain-craft. If your contributor is correct, and if British ski-runners are as ignorant and as reckless

as he suggests, we should expect a heavy death roll. Conversely, if accidents are rare, the British ski-runner must be credited with more knowledge and more judgment and more prudence than your contributor is willing to allow him.

I confine myself to British ski-runners because I possess our own accident statistics up to date, and also because the *ALPINE JOURNAL* in the main confines its attack to British ski-runners.

Of course, if a ski-runner employs a professional guide, the responsibility of an accident rests with the guide. Cases in which guided ski-runners have been killed cannot be cited to sustain the charge that the ski-runner is an amiable idiot who rushes into danger unaccompanied by experienced leaders. This thesis can only be maintained by the evidence of accidents in which ski-runners are unaccompanied by guides; for by hypothesis the guide is an experienced mountaineer.

British ski-ing dates back to the nineties. The aggregate membership of the British ski clubs at the present moment is not far short of 4000. A complete list of all British ski-ing accidents is published in the current issue of the *British Ski Year Book*. I know of only eight fatal accidents in which British ski-runners have been the victims, eight accidents involving a total of 13 deaths. Of these, one occurred in a race, one was due to a fall on a hidden rock while practising for a race, and one was due to suffocation following heart failure on the practice slopes. Only five of these accidents have any real bearing on the point at issue. Of these five accidents, three were due to mistakes by professional guides. Again, in the case of the Valluga accident, British runners were following a professional instructor and a local man, who could reasonably have been expected to understand local conditions. The Valluga accident can therefore hardly be quoted in support of the theory that British ski-runners run into danger without expert advice. I know of one case, and of *one* case only, of a fatal accident to a party composed entirely of amateur British ski-runners.

This is a record of which we have every reason to be proud, a record which compares very favourably with that of summer mountaineers, and which is quite inconsistent with the thesis advanced by your contributor.

I attribute our low death roll to various causes. From the nature of his sport the ski-runner is compelled to devote far more attention to snow-craft than the average mountaineer. Again, few ski-runners employ guides for small expeditions; but even small expeditions can be dangerous, and the man who is thrown on his own resources is forced to study snow more accurately than the man who climbs with guides. Finally, ski-runners are far more interested in the theory of snow-craft than your contributor assumes. The sale of a small book devoted entirely to problems of snow-craft has been surprisingly large. In these days people will spend money on anything rather than a book, and this fact therefore speaks for

itself as evidence of a wide-spread interest in snow, its perils and problems.

The sentences which your contributor quoted with so much disapproval from my own article are calculated to convey a false impression when divorced from their context. I was writing as a historian, and a historian is less concerned to awaken a conviction of sin than to record the facts. The 'baneful influence' of the remarks which your contributor quoted—baneful, I suppose, because flattering—are more than counteracted by the attempts which the present writer and many others have made for many years to impress on British ski-runners the need for long, patient and consistent study of a difficult science—snow-craft in winter and in spring.

If you contrast what the Alpine Club and the British Ski Clubs have done to promote a better knowledge of the mountains in winter and in spring, you would, I think, admit that the British Ski Clubs at least have not been idle. The Alpine Ski Club published the first Ski Guide to any part of the Swiss Alps, and two volumes of that Ski Guide to the Bernese Oberland have been issued. The first ski map to the Bernese Oberland was the joint production of an English and a Swiss member of the Alpine Ski Club. This map was distributed by the Swiss Alpine Club to all their members. The first book dealing systematically with snow-craft in spring and in winter was the work of an English member of the Alpine Ski Club. This book in its earlier form has been translated into German and its later form into French. The author was elected an honorary member of the G.H.M., a great compliment to British ski-ing.

Every issue of the *British Ski Year Book* contains articles on snow-craft or avalanches. A recent issue of *Ski Notes and Queries* contains an examination on snow-craft, and prizes have been offered by the Ski Club of Great Britain for the best answers.

The Club sent a special Commission to investigate the accident on the Valluga and the Report appears in the present issue of the Year Book.

The Club issues frequent warnings about avalanches and other dangers of the winter Alps.

There are, of course, foolish ski-runners, just as there are foolish mountaineers. Expert ski-runners sometimes make mistakes, and it would not be difficult to prove from the pages of the *ALPINE JOURNAL* that expert mountaineers are not always infallible. But surely ski-runners should be left to censure ski-runners. *ἔρδοι τις ἦν ἕκαστος εἰδείη τέχνην.*

The British Ski Clubs are not unmindful of their responsibilities and are determined to do all in their power to build up a sane tradition of caution in the winter Alps. Surely the courteous relations which are customary between the adherents of all other sports should also characterize the exchange of views between mountaineers and ski-runners, linked together as they are by their common love for the hills.

Ski-runners are ever ready to admire those who have made Alpine history, and I was grateful for the generous tribute in the *ALPINE JOURNAL* to 'the qualities of quick decision, determination and courage demanded of the ski-runners over unknown ground.'

'We cannot,' writes another great mountaineer, 'be wholly devoted to one enthusiasm without learning something about the nature of all enthusiasm, and without in the end grounding at least a respect for all objects and pursuits, however originally unsympathetic to us, which arouse a like devotion in others.' This is well said, and I am confident that the enthusiasm of the ski-runner will in time earn the respect of the mountaineer in this country, and that the cleavage between mountaineers and ski-runners, which is unknown abroad, will disappear. Even in England there appear to be some who recognize that the aloof attitude of the Alpine Club in the past is a matter for regret.

I quote from 'A.J.' 37, 409 :—

'Lastly there is an indirect lesson for a small but not negligible group of members of the Alpine Club. Some seem to hold that the Club is not concerned with ski-ing. If they will only read Marcel Kurz's book, they can scarcely fail to see that winter mountaineering is so irretrievably mixed up with ski-ing, that to persist in their present attitude must ultimately lead them to the logical conclusion that the former is also outside the scope of the Club's activities. Kurz mentions the fact that the Swiss Alpine Club fell into the same trap, but has since realized and corrected their errors. May the Alpine Club do likewise.'

It is because I share the hope expressed in this last paragraph that I have wearied the reader with the defence of a sport which I love, but which was not my first love, for I suffered from mountain fever long before I began to ski.

In this country, ski-ing is still a young sport. We have had to contend against great difficulties. We are trying to build up traditions which you have inherited, and we look to the Alpine Club for a sympathetic understanding of our own peculiar problems. I hope that we shall not continue to look in vain.

I am, etc.,

ARNOLD LUNN.

CHALET BERNA, GRINDELWALD,
July 4, 1927.

SIR,—The part of Mr. Lunn's letter which deals with the question of Christian Almer seems to have been written under the apprehension that snowcraft is a subject limited to snow of the particular class which happens to be found in the Alps in winter. As so many skiers look to Mr. Lunn for advice, it is unfortunate that a statement made by him, which might lead them to think they know all that is to be known of a difficult subject, especially difficult in the case of winter snow, should ever have appeared in print. Even if

the ice conditions in 1874 were such that the present alternative route to the Bäregg was feasible at that date, the question as to whether Almer took one route or the other on some particular occasion seems quite irrelevant. In fact it seems unwise to try to substantiate a statement so obviously open to dispute, when its acceptance might give others an undue sense of security.

Mr. Lunn's letter deals with matters quite apart from Almer's skill in snowcraft; and as he seems to indicate the existence of a grievance on the part of British skiers that there is a cleavage between them and British mountaineers, it may be well to try and get an insight into the true relationship between ski-ing and mountaineering. Safe ski-ing necessitates a certain amount of mountaineering knowledge, just as sailing on the Broads necessitates a certain amount of seamanship; but the mountain skill attainable by the skier pure and simple, however skilful he be at ski-ing, is as limited as the seamanship which can be acquired in Norfolk. Ask the expert skier to lead a party over some simple untracked snow walk, Zermatt to Chanrion or across the Pigne d'Arolla, for example, and see how he will shape. Untracked snow would be desirable but not essential. There may be sufficient pitfalls even with tracks ahead. In winter tracks are less easily obliterated. The indelibility of ski tracks tends to prevent a long qualification list of ski-ing expeditions from proving any mountaineering qualification whatsoever. Occasionally it may lead the ignorant into danger; but in the long run it probably accounts for the paucity of ski-ing accidents to which Mr. Lunn refers.

Ascent on ski requires the minimum of skill in ski-ing. Descent requires no more mountaineering knowledge than the ascent. A quite indifferent performer on ski can descend as safely as the most skilful, provided that his mountain sense suffices; except in the quite rare cases in which roped ski-ing has to be resorted to. In spite of this the mountaineer is interested in ski-ing because his ski enable him to approach the mountains in winter and in spring, whether his object be hill wandering or true mountaineering; but he realizes that the latter only starts when he has to leave his ski behind. He understands the utility of ski, but dislikes the undue importance attached to third-class tests, competitions and downhill running. Even the Alpine Ski Club, which was formed 'to promote mountaineering on ski,' is not blameless in this respect. 'The Proposer should submit his own impressions, based on personal observation, of the candidate's ski-ing, his speed, his control, his mastery of the turns, and his powers of endurance.' What about his mountaineering?

Those British skiers who do not regard the hills as 'glorified toboggan runs,' to quote, as Mr. Lunn does, from 'A.J.' 37, need not look in vain to the Alpine Club for the sympathetic understanding which he desires. Apart from other considerations, too many members of the Club are skiers for this to be otherwise. Difficulty,

if any, in this direction must be put down to those who use the hills in a manner which is contrary to the traditions of the Alpine Club, or who claim for ski-ing false values from the mountaineering point of view. My only excuse for writing this letter is the fact that you, Sir, have kindly shown me the one written by Mr. Lunn, in which he has quoted from a note of mine which appeared in 'A.J.' 37. I still adhere to that note, which, taken as a whole, is quite consistent with what I write now.

The skier's attitude towards the mountains controls the mountaineer's attitude towards the skier. If more skiers would only find time to do a little summer climbing their outlook would extend beyond the narrow groove they trace with their ski. Ski-ing would give them greater joy; for they would recognize in every irregularity of the winter snow, which they now regard merely as an impediment to their downhill race, an indication of what really lives beneath. Their regard for the hills would be increased; and, for them at all events, Parsenn—Fideris—up by train would be a thing of the past.

Lastly, Mr. Lunn's reference to the Valluga accident should not be misunderstood. Unless the unguided British party had a distinct understanding with the professional in charge of the party ahead, no responsibility whatever for what happened to them can be placed on his shoulders.

I am, etc.,

P. J. H. UNNA.

[The real point is, as Mr. Unna shows, that the mountaineer only begins 'mountaineering' at the place where ski have to be abandoned. How many great 'Summits' have actually been reached *on ski* ?

The three greatest winter expeditions of recent years are unquestionably La Meije, Les Écrins and Monte di Scerscen. In the case of La Meije, ski were worn as far as the foot of the Promontoire; on Les Écrins, as far as the Col des Écrins, reached from the Glacier Blanc; on Monte di Scerscen, as far as the Tschierva hut. In other words, in only one instance were ski worn to within 3000 ft. of the summit. Yet the first two have been described as 'ski ascents'!

It even comes to this: are ski the most suitable aids to serious winter mountaineering? We are told that the vast majority of these instruments now manufactured in Norway and Sweden are exported to America and Canada; yet, on the longest and most terrible 'mountaineering' journey ever made, the ascent of Mount Logan, ski were not employed, not even on the approaches. A full account is given ('A.J.' 38, 260, 262) of the three different 'aids' (ordinary Canadians, Alaskans, and bearpaws). On the authority of Messrs. Hall and MacCarthy it is stated that while all were satisfactory, 'they do not think that the "bearpaw" shoe can be equalled for climbing.'

There has never been any question of unfriendliness, such as Mr. Lunn rather appears to imply, existing between the Alpine Club and British skiers. But, until we perceive these latter, as in Tyrol, setting forth on their ski equipped for mountaineering, nailed boots and ice-axes, we shall fail to take much interest in speed races, third-class tests, slaloms and all the paraphernalia of modern winter pot-hunting. We realize that there are many British skiers to whom these remarks do not apply—men and women who love the mountains for themselves and who find sufficient reward in so doing—just as there are many parts of Switzerland still said to be free from cups or prizes for jazzing. But, because we recognize that, for good or for evil, ski have come to stay, we feel bound to point out the reasons for our lack of enthusiasm in the performances of the majority of skiers.—E. L. S.]

PROCEEDINGS OF THE ALPINE CLUB.

A GENERAL MEETING of the Club was held in the Hall, 23 Savile Row, London, W. 1, on Tuesday, May 3, 1927, at 8.30 P.M., Sir George H. Morse, *President*, in the Chair.

The following candidates were balloted for and elected Members of the Club, namely, Dr. William Sargent Ladd, Mr. Stephen Coleby Morland, Mr. Henry Alwyn Trier, and Col. Roger Cochran Wilson, D.S.O., M.C.

The Regulations for the Winter Dinner were approved *nem. con.*

A vote of thanks was accorded Mr. Sydney Spencer and Mr. R. W. Brant for their work in arranging the Exhibition of Alpine Paintings.

Mr. G. E. HOWARD then read a Paper entitled 'Illusions.' Mr. H. E. M. Stutfield, Mr. D. W. Freshfield, Mr. H. G. Willink, Mr. G. A. Solly, Mr. H. V. Reade, and Mr. R. S. Morrish took part in the subsequent discussion, which was terminated with a cordial vote of thanks to the reader of the Paper.

The HONORARY SECRETARY, Mr. Sydney Spencer, afterwards showed some of his slides of the Mont Blanc range and the Dolomites, which were greatly appreciated by those present.

An Exhibition of Alpine Paintings was held in the Hall of the Club, 23 Savile Row, London, W. 1, from Monday, May 2, to Saturday, May 14. There was an attendance of about 150 at the Private View on Monday, May 2. The Exhibition was opened to the public from May 3 to the 14th.

We learn with much regret of the death of Mr. ELIOT HOWARD, one of the senior members of the Alpine Club, to which he was elected in 1867. An obituary will appear in the next number.

CORRIGENDA TO NO. 234.

- P. 22. Illustration. Second Panorama ; *for* ' King's Peak ' *read* ' King Peak.'
- P. 68, footnote 15, line 2, *after* ' in the interest of ' *insert* 'such;'._i
- P. 110, line 22, *for* ' sabs ' *read* ' slabs.'
- P. 136, footnote 8, line 4, *for* ' W.' *read* ' E.'
- P. 140, footnote 11, last line, *for* ' Herr ' *read* ' Frau.'
- P. 143, line 1, *for* ' 3370 ' *read* ' 3770.'
- P. 158, last line, *for second* ' 1926 ' *read* ' 1925.'
- P. 160, line 35, *for* ' 1926 ' *read* ' 1927.'

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CORRIGENDA TO NO. 235

- P. 244, line 5 ; p. 247, line 26 ; *for* ' Marnis ' *read* ' Marius.'
- P. 244, line 20, *read* ' agreeable.'
- P. 331, paragraph 4, *for* ' St. Christophe-en-Oisams ' *read* ' Oisans.'
- P. 362-3. ' A Naturalist in Himalaya,' *for* ' Kingston ' *read* ' Hingston ' throughout.

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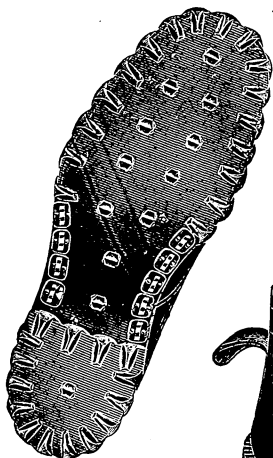
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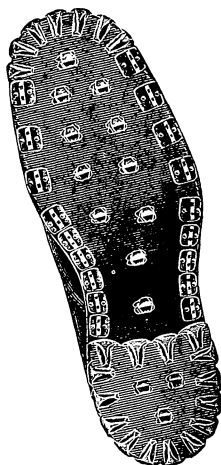
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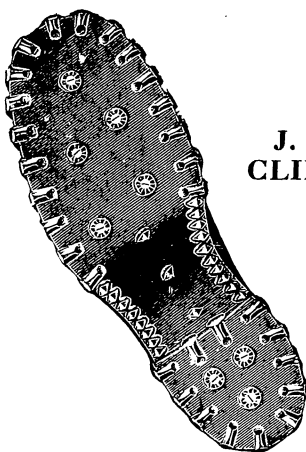


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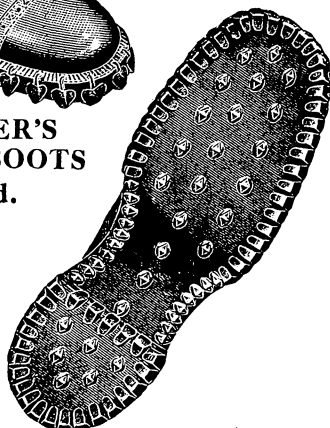


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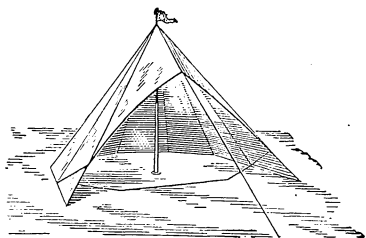
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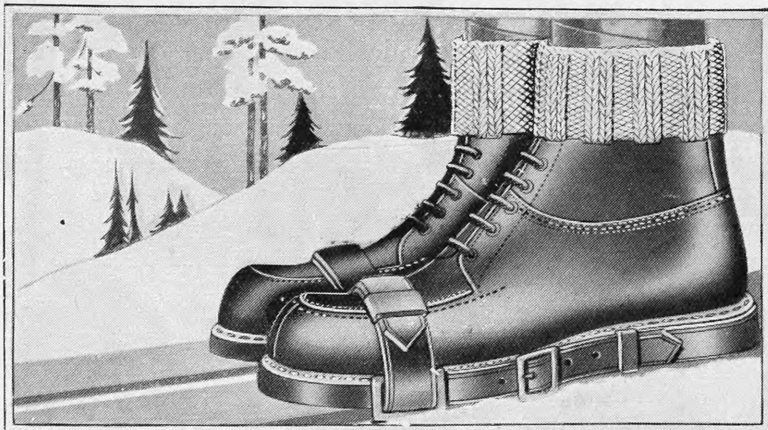
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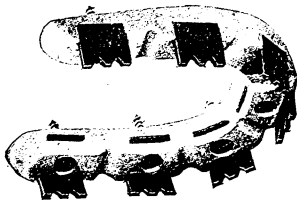
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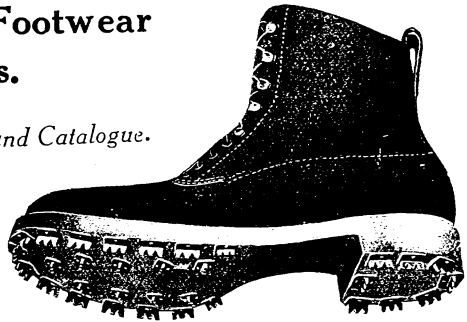
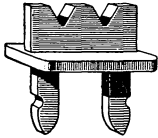
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